What Are the Soviets Afraid Of? *The Editors on Poland*

Ted Solotaroff on 'Laughter and Forgetting' • Reagan's Think Tank

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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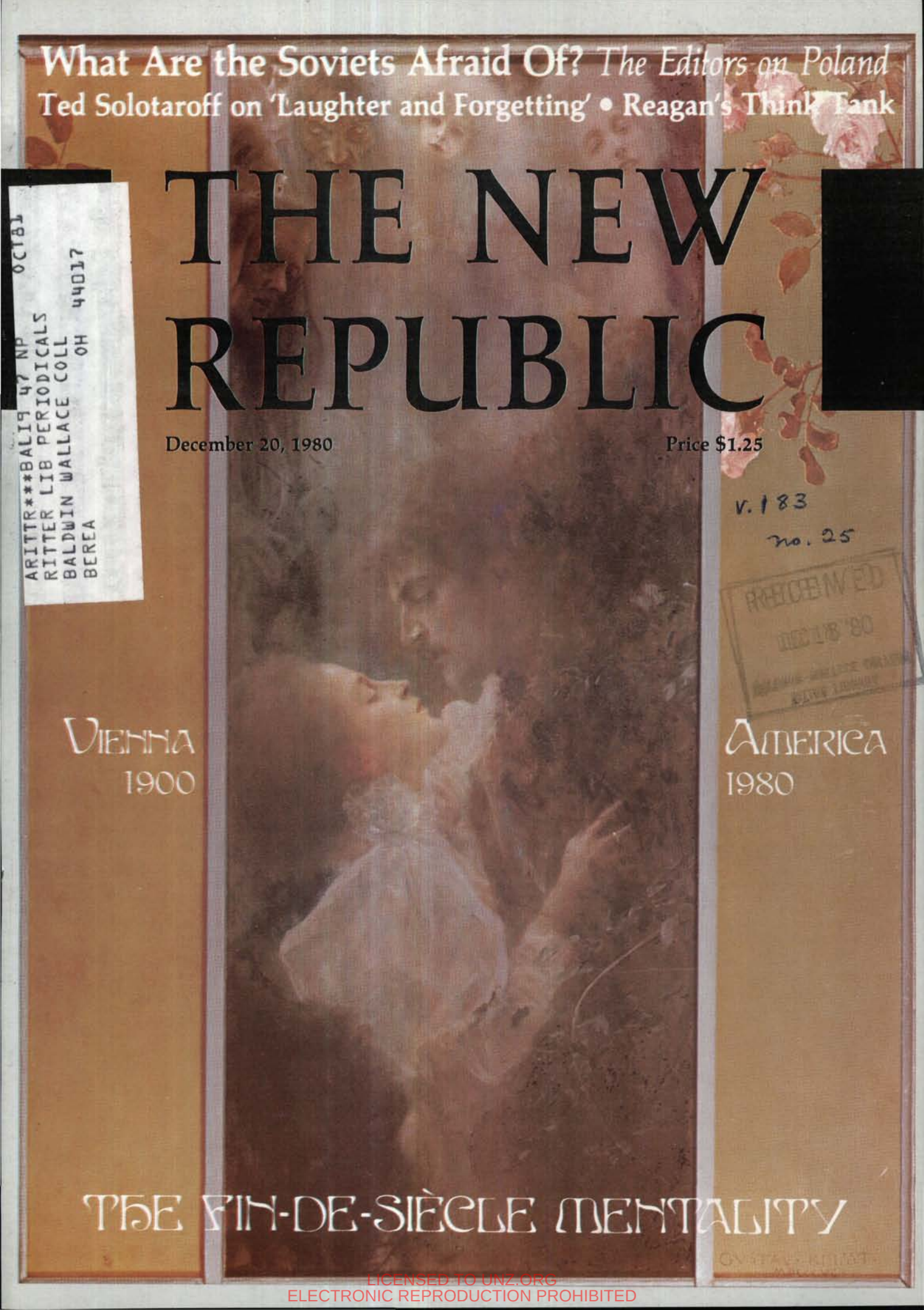

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TRB

from Washington
December 20, 1980

Reagan vs. the Media

President Eisenhower thrust out his jaw, his pink face reddening, his hands clenched. The irrepressible Sarah had asked another of her questions. It was April 1958 and the country was in recession. Why didn't the administration do something? reporters wanted to know. But when the president recognized somebody else in the press conference, the uninhibited, unabashed Sarah McClellan grabbed the floor and startlingly demanded if the new Pentagon organization plan might not some day give a dictator "a personalized military force." Ike scowled even before she began to speak.

"Now, look!" he exploded, angry and tight-lipped. To the next four questioners—all critical—he delivered what Eric Sevareid later called "an oral pistol-whipping."

A week later the president was pointedly calm and questions were bland. Snickering a little, somebody asked what he thought about press conferences. "Well now, Mr. Folliard," he said, "now here is a funny thing; I think I like these press conferences." Pause. Some questions, he said, were "inconsequential." Some were "a little bit more personal than they need be." But, he concluded, "I say emphatically that the press conference is a very fine latter-day American institution."

No governmental device has changed more in the last 50 years than the presidential press conference. Every president from FDR has changed it. I wonder what Ronald Reagan will do. It's an engine to be used. "Of all the processes of government in all the lands of the world," said Howard K. Smith when he returned to America in 1955, "this is the single most fascinating, absorbing . . . and daring." Six months later Eric Sevareid said of it: "There are the constant, renewed revelations of the president's appearance—the look in his face, the timber of his voice; there are the judgments to be made of his physical and emotional state, his visceral attitudes about men and events. This president happens to be a very self-revealing, open kind of person; he wears not only his heart but his mind on his sleeve." That was 25 years back. And Reagan, what will he do? Let's consider the evolution of the thing, and where we are now.

The American system of government is unique in its separation of powers; the presidential press conference evolved as a method to take some of the rigidity out of the process. Parliaments in London and Ottawa have formal "question times" when members question the prime minister; in America it's done by the press. Or that's the theory, anyway. The system is in decay. Partly that's the fault of technological change; partly it's the result of presidential personalities. Recent presidents have had rougher times; it has subdued them, made them less flamboyant. Problems are intractable; there seems less "give" in our institutions. We are in an era of one-term presidents, I think.

FDR had two press conferences a week before the war, and then one; all told, he held 998 in his glorious incumbency. He knew how to handle them. He followed gun-shy Hoover, who had only 66 in four years. They are almost too intimate for presidents in trouble. The public learns what the president is thinking, and the president learns what the public is asking. "Of the few social institutions which tend to keep a president in touch with reality," wrote LBJ's acerbic press secretary, George Reedy, in *Twilight of the Presidency*, "the most effective and the most resented by the chief beneficiary—is the press." Why then has this extraordinary device of two-way communication slipped in recent years? Truman knew what he was about—he had 324 in six years. Johnson got into trouble with Vietnam; in the single year 1965 there were only seven. In six years, beleaguered Nixon had 37. Jimmy Carter started out at a fast clip, as many do, but soon got discouraged. He has had only 59 formal White House conferences in four years, the latest on September 18 (when he warmly denied calling Reagan a "racist.")

TV and radio have killed the old cozy press conference. Reporters crowded into the Oval Office around FDR's desk, covered with totems; no transcripts were made and few reporters took down direct quotations. It was a buoyant time. Fred Storm of the United Press towered over the desk and Roosevelt ordered a chair brought and told Storm to sit in it from then on. (Cheers from the rear: "Thanks, Mr. President; the UP shouldn't hire giants!") Publishers hated FDR; reporters generally liked him. It was a one-party press; the country has forgotten about it. In 1944 only 22 percent of the US daily newspaper circulation was Democratic to 60 percent Republican; in 1952, 14.5 percent to 67 percent. There was an arrogance in some cities. They deserved the competition of new media, TV and radio. But when they came the old press conference died. A new era began, and now reporters jerk up and down in a crowded hall, trying to get recognition. There is almost no chance for crucial follow-up questions.

So that's the way it is, Ronald Reagan. The tool is there. It's all yours, the greatest publicity machine in the world. It goes right into the living room of America and the people yearn to believe you. All the advantages are on your side. You can recognize whom you will, duck answers, dominate, evade; you can make fine speeches. Questions may be pointed but they will be respectful. Reporters mostly will ask the questions you expect when you come into the room. Can you handle it? This is different from those quickie one-liners you gave for General Electric and in the campaign. Can you defend your position on inflation? on the SALT talks? Can you persuade people to your side? You are a communicator (Carter wasn't); that's your trade. The great American political theater now has a professional actor in charge. There's only one thing at stake—your credibility. It's critical.

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Correspondence

Not so fond hopes

To the editors:

Your lead editorial, "So Far, So Good—So Far" (*TNR*, December 6) refers to Ronald Reagan's "four immediate predecessors, all of whom came to office invested with the public's fond hopes. . . ."

You exaggerate the national hopefulness. Of the four, LBJ came to office in national sorrow, by virtue or fault of an assassin's marksmanship. Richard M. Nixon squeaked in because a better man was too closely associated with the Vietnam policies of an administration he was pledged to support, and because a few others chose to believe in the illusion of a "new" Nixon. Gerald Ford came to office by appointment by a man soon to be fully discredited for probable crimes in office, to fill the place of a man well described as a common crook, and he promptly (and sanctimoniously) pardoned his disgraced benefactor. In view of Ford's manner of achieving office and his performance in it, it's a mindless distortion to imply that the citizenry had anything but hollow and desperate hopes for Carter and his scruffy crew.

Ronald Reagan's election, an electoral "landslide" but by a fairly close popular majority, implies less of fond hopes than of frustration, desperation, and disgust with the sorry four-way parlay of his predecessors.

John B. Davenport
Northbrook, Illinois

Baby boom or economic boom?

To the editors:

TRB usually offers cogent insights into issues. But in his November 29 column, "Other Matters," he reveals an abysmal misunderstanding of the reasons for the flood of illegal aliens from Mexico to the US: "The US has imposed the discipline of birth control on itself; Mexico hasn't, and the tide of illegals is the result."

Bunk! The United States did not impose the discipline of birth control on itself. Increasing educational and job opportunities for women, a lowered infant mortality rate, and allowing parents to be less dependent on progeny in old age with the implementation of social security programs are among the reasons it is in the best interest of United States couples to have smaller families. Witness that in this country those most deprived of job opportunities, health care, and old-age security—blacks and Hispanics—have the highest birth rates. Even the Chinese, who have exercised Orwellian discipline in birth control, have only seen their birth rate fall as they begin to increase their people's standard of living.

There is a Catch-22: lowered birth rates depend on economic development and, to some extent, economic development depends on lowered birth rates. But it is simplistic to believe that a greater discipline in using birth control will break this vicious circle.

Tim Marx
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Voting rights in North Carolina

To the editors:

While I am in emphatic personal agreement with Stephen Chapman's views on the usefulness of the 1965 Voting Rights Act ("Strom's Law," *TNR*, December 6), and believe it vital that the act be renewed, I must correct his misimpressions about the applicability and impact of the law in North Carolina.

First, the law did *not* apply, as he says, throughout North Carolina, but only to 39 counties then exercising the option of imposing a literacy test for voting. It is significant to note, by the way, that the North Carolina literacy test for voting had, at that point, been sustained by the US Supreme Court in the face of a challenge, on grounds that its use for purposes of chicanery or unconstitutional deprivation of the right to vote could not be demonstrated.

Second, it is not accurate to say that black voter registration in North Carolina "nearly doubled" after the 1965 act went into effect. In 1964, on the eve of the act, there were 258,000 registered black voters in North Carolina, representing 46.8 percent of the black voting-age population. Of 11 southern states, North Carolina had the fifth highest percentage of registration of eligible black voters, trailing only Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, and Florida. By 1970, black registration had increased to 302,000, representing 54.8 percent of the eligible black voters.

I wish that the numbers and percentages were higher in North Carolina and in all the states, for there is no question in my mind that the 1965 Voting Rights Act was the most salutary and useful thing that has happened to southern politics since the Civil War. But I can testify from first-hand observation—as a practicing newspaperman in North Carolina during the 1960s—that efforts to obstruct black voting by fraud were, if they existed at all, minimal. No one, to my knowledge, has accused the North Carolina State Elections Board, which oversees voter registration, of any collaboration in, or countenancing of, racially discriminatory practices. Indeed, under Governor Terry Sanford (1961-65) the State Elections Board was headed by an exemplary North Carolina liberal who was, incidentally, a former law clerk to Justice Hugo Black.

Edwin M. Yoder Jr.
The Washington Star
Washington, DC

Stephen Chapman replies:

Mr. Yoder is correct in noting that only some of the counties in North Carolina were brought under federal supervision by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I did not say that black registration doubled in each of the six states, but in all of them combined.

Who's expendable?

To the editors:

In advising president-elect Reagan on human rights policy, you propose that he "insist that repression and alienation of a population be kept to a minimum, and exact a promise of immediate reform ("Rights and Reagan," *TNR*, November 29). Since there's little evidence that repressive regimes will heed such advice, precisely because they believe the United States will support murder and torture rather than risk another Cuba or Nicaragua—*The New Republic*'s position, too, I fear—I'd like to know if there are limits to the extent of repression by "friendly" regimes you will tolerate. For example, how many peasants and labor leaders are you prepared to see murdered in El Salvador with US arms to prevent the triumph of a left-wing revolution?

Paul Goodman
El Cerrito, California

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

December 20, 1980

Who Is Afraid?

The editors of the *New York Times* believe that if the Soviets invade Poland, they will do so because they are afraid. That's one way of looking at it. Of course, the Russians do fear the spread of the Polish example. But if the Soviets invade Poland, they will do so precisely because they are not afraid, and because they believe that an invasion will gain them more than it will lose. The debit side, to be sure, would not be inconsequential. There would be, for example, the tremendous price of floating the Polish economy and preventing or relieving the imminent winter famine. But their reckoning is not a bookkeeper's calculation, the sort one expects from a conservative and cautious, even tired, leadership, which the Cyrus Vances of our diplomatic establishment so sagely have reassured us has been at the helm in Moscow for years. Already the massive military maneuvers on the Polish borders, the orchestration of hostile propaganda from Warsaw Pact capitals, and simultaneous clamp-downs by the secret police in these same places evoke a criminal daring on the part of Russia's ruling elite. This daring is altogether alien to the sort of prudence which, it was said, had come to characterize our partners in detente. It is not different from the daring that struck down the drives for freedom in Hungary in 1956 (in Poland then, too) and in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

At this late date, the Soviets should not have been capable of such daring. For 63 years, their society has suffered an encroaching desert of economic backwardness and primitive social conditions, as measured by infant mortality, life expectancy, the reappearance of dormant diseases at home, and the failure of the export model to produce either goods or a good life. But the American responses first to Angola, then to Ethiopia, and lastly and mostly to the Russian engineered *putsch*, the subsequent invasion, and the ongoing military occupation of Afghanistan have taught the Soviets that daring may not be required to get what they want. The US may "link" Soviet behavior to an escalated nuclear arms race—a reckless and self-defeating reaction—but it will do nothing that is politically effective and difficult, or economically costly. Yes, the Soviets will suffer an assault of Western opprobrium if they move batallions across the Polish frontiers, and possibly even the suspension of trade and credits. But they won't experience these for long—not given the cupidity of the multinational banks and corporations, which probably would prefer the stability imposed by the boots of the Red Army to the contingent chaos inherent in the freedoms sought by workers spontaneously (and in a Catholic country almost mystically) joined in Solidarity. They can hope that with the Russians running Poland, there would be some postponement of demands for rescheduling of Poland's $24 billion foreign debt. This subject has been the prime obsession of the financial press since the initial strikes in Gdansk, an accurate enough reflection of advanced capitalism's tendency to equate national interests with pecuniary ones.

No, the Kremlin is not paralyzed by the fear of political discomfort. It survived the snuffing out of Polish October and Prague Spring quite well, thank you. Condemnation by the Islamic Conference after the Afghan enormity of last Christmas has not impeded Soviet relationships with the PLO, Algeria, Libya, South Yemen, Syria, Syria's enemy Iraq, or even Iraq's enemy Iran. If anything, these precedents may suggest to the Russians that boldness, however cruel, exacts respect, however grudging. The world's acquiescence in the virtual annexation of Afghanistan to the USSR must have been especially encouraging for those who planned the adventure. For this Soviet

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move south toward the Gulf was not in that curious jurisdiction recognized as the Russian sphere of influence, lines hitherto scrupulously respected in Moscow as defining the limits of direct intervention. Afghanistan had been outside the Soviet sphere of influence, but now it is fallen to the Russian bear—not quite without protest, but altogether without intercession. In these very days, Indira Gandhi is entertaining Comrade Brezhnev in the hope that his avarice for chunks of central Asia is sated.

Well, some cynics say, the Poles are not wogs. They're more like us, so we'll not leave them to grim destiny. A few say that and mean it. More say so and don't mean it. Others don't say so at all, saying instead cool and dispassionate and callous things, admittedly "difficult for people emotionally committed to freedom." Willy Brandt, for example, last week in Washington trotted out the argument from spheres of interest, not to defend Afghanistan from the Soviets, but to betray Poland to them. It all goes back to Yalta, he reminded his listeners, and in one short press conference casually conceded what liberals, under pressure from the historical revision of the right, had been stoutly denying about the meaning of FDR's last concessions to Stalin. Now here's a man who takes his *ostpolitik* seriously: in an uncanny echoing of *Tass* and *Pravda*, Brandt urged the West to let Poland and Russia resolve their "internal problems" internally. We'd already agreed to do that, he said, and he dragged out the text from Helsinki to prove it. So those who argued then that recognition of Moscow's postwar conquests was simply perfunctory now urge that it binds us to complicity in whatever Moscow wants, however Moscow wants it. And the compensating "basket" of human rights, which the Soviet Union had accepted as norms for itself, in an ostensible break with the routines of oppression, now turn out to be just that—norms, like the Ten Commandments, consistently violated and traduced.

It may be that Helsinki's Basket Three gave hope to imprisoned souls everywhere. It also made for thrilling rhetoric subsequently in Belgrade and Madrid. What it did not do was open the doors of emigration, reunite families, empty the mental hospitals of political prisoners, end the practice of enforced internal exile to forsaken and isolated places, allow information and opinion to be exchanged freely, curtail systematic and official anti-Semitism or discrimination against other national minorities and religious groups, or reinstate dismissed dissidents to their jobs. The litany of violations by the Soviet Union and its satellites of their undertakings at Helsinki is virtually endless. Every so often this becomes vivid to us in the West because the victim is some eminent figure like Andrei Sakharov, whose prominence makes him visible even through the curtains obscuring communist reality. But the reality is most grim for the nameless ones, in the millions, whose heroism is in surviving and who know that fear should not be a way of life.

The other aspects of the Helsinki Agreement have fared rather better than the human rights provisions, and none more so than those encouraging East-West trade. The web of commercial arrangements that has grown since Helsinki shows the structural flaws of that agreement. The political, economic, and human rights components of the accords were supposed to reinforce each other. Instead the financial nexus has taken on a logic of its own, buttressing whatever political arrangements the powers can impose and battering those human rights the people have been promised.

After Afghanistan it couldn't have been more obvious. The US effort to organize a Western Alliance grain and high-technology boycott of the Soviet Union foundered on the rock of the profit motive. It hardly matters that the profits of this trade with the countries of the communist bloc may turn out to be more illusory than real, with Western borrowings of extortionate and recycled petrodollars being repaid in much devalued currency. It's the dream that counts, and the dream that mesmerizes. In any event, our own policy of embargo was scarcely consistent or exemplary. When the Japanese and Canadians made it clear late last month that they were giving up the pretense of being associated with the embargo, we long ago had made it a near-hollow shell ourselves. Not till Soviet troops were poised to strike on the Polish borders did the Carter administration act to restrain the Dresser

Food for Thought

Western Europe's Leaders Seem Ready to Give Food Aid to Poland

LUXEMBOURG, Dec. 1—Western European leaders were considering plans tonight to provide food aid to Poland to help ease its economic difficulties and demonstrate support for the political concessions the Polish authorities have made to their workers.

—*The New York Times*, December 2, 1980

Europe won't aid Poland

LUXEMBOURG—European leaders will issue a strong statement against outside intervention in Poland, but will stop short of offering specific food aid as the Poles have requested, sources at a European Common Market summit meeting said yesterday.

—*The Boston Globe*, December 2, 1980

(Thanks to Daniel Swanson of Brighton, Massachusetts.)

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drawing by Vint Lawrence

Industries oil equipment deal with the USSR. By then the work was all but completed, and all of the familiar old saws could be invoked: they'll finish the project anyway by themselves or with our competitors; canceling it will cause more unemployment in America; it's unfair to punish just one company; and so on. Lest anyone think that the flaccidness of US resolve is peculiar to the present administration, think how credible Ronald Reagan's hard line must seem, both to our friends and to the Russians, when viewed in the context of his extreme solicitude for American farmers and his opposition to withholding grain from the Soviet aggressor.

So business goes on as usual. On the very day that the Polish government was being particularly heavy-handed in trying to intimidate the rebellious workers, the European Economic Commission announced its intention to sell cut-rate beef and butter to Warsaw, even though the Poles have refused to recognize the Community, insisting that it is somehow just another consortium of imperialists. The East Germans, who in recent weeks have intensified repression in their own country and intensified pressure on Poland, have proven that such behavior carries little risk to what they see as their chosen priorities. They have tried to prove, as the London *Financial Times* put it, that the regime of Erich Honecker can "exclude trade between the two Germanies from the current freeze in political relations." And what company is the instrument for fulfilling this wish? The metaphor is almost too appropriate: it's Friedrich Krupp Industries of Essen which will be building a new advanced technology power plant for the East Germans. Add to these and other entanglements the fresh dependence of Western Europe and Japan on Soviet gas—to the extent of roughly 30 percent of their needs—and you have a situation in which virtually no Soviet provocation could elicit anything remotely like a meaningful protest or retribution from the West.

One understandable response to these developments is to pretend that manifestations of the Soviet Union's advantage and confidence are actually manifestations of its insecurity. Secretary of State Muskie, for example, in what turned out to be only the first in a series of post-election valedictories, announced that the Soviet Union was seeking "a face-saving way out of Afghanistan." Almost as if to ridicule his wishful thinking, the Soviets promptly launched another big offensive, bombed defenseless villages, reported record kill ratios, and increased the number of their troops in the country. This didn't even ignite Muskie's legendary temper, apparently not incited again until President Carter queered the Dresser transaction.

This latter kind of action, we now should make clear to the Russians and to our allies, does not exhaust possible responses by the US to further Soviet aggres-

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sion. Moscow should begin to fear for supply routes to its vulnerable clients, particularly to Cuba. And the Europeans should know it would not be without cost to them were they to try to undercut American economic measures against a USSR that has invaded Poland: a French plane that lands in Leningrad under certain circumstances may be denied the right to land in Chicago.

What can we hope for Poland? Certainly that the Soviets do not invade and flood the country in blood. But much as it would not be for us to counsel the Poles in bravery, it's not for us to counsel them in timidity or even in restraint. The struggle against the Soviet heel is one we've decided against, but they live under it and not us. For years they have lived according to a political version of James Joyce's formula, "silence, exile, and cunning." They now may be eager to confront the brute directly, goad him on, and lay the truth of his rule out for all to see. And perhaps, by so doing, they may move closer in some way to defeating him and ending his terror. We should not dishonor their struggle by pretending it is against something more manageable and less onerous than those who experience it think it is. In a moving memoir of his own ideological journey, *In Quest* (Columbia University Press), the democratic radical sociologist and historian Sigmund Diamond recounts a conversation with a Polish intellectual in Krakow: "As for the United States, you are a great people, a generous people, but why are you so naive and gullible? How can you take Helsinki seriously?" That is a query that should haunt us for years.

White House Watch

Interim Jitters

Between Ronald Reagan's first and second visits to Washington after he was elected, the national and world news center was not the White House but the shabby downtown office building where his transition staff was quartered. A hundred and more reporters, cameramen, and technicians crowded every morning at 9:30 into a makeshift press room where Reagan's nominal Washington spokesman, Jim Brady, a veteran of Nixon and Ford administration news offices, had so little in solid information to offer that he jokingly apologized for not justifying journalists listing him on their lunchtime expense accounts. He and his principal assistant, Lawrence Speakes, who also served Nixon and Ford as a press officer, had trouble wangling time for reporters with the few senior transition officials who knew anything worth reporting. It didn't really matter for several reasons, the chief of which was that the national media, print and electronic, were absolutely determined to manufacture Reagan news regardless of how much basis there was for it. Neither Reagan nor the media were well served by the resultant spate of speculative non-reporting. Reagan was made to seem uncertain, changeable, unable to attract the Cabinet talent that he'd promised to recruit, and the media made themselves out to be phony and silly. Much and maybe all of that would end when the Cabinet selections were announced, but in the meantime nobody, including the public, benefited from the interim jitters.

A secondary reason for the frantic preoccupation with Reagan was that the Carter White House and the Carter government plunged after the election into a quasi-coma so far as reported news went. It was a remarkable phenomenon, unprecedented in the transitions from one presidency to another that this reporter has observed since Roosevelt's and Truman's times. More actually was done and went on than was reported, and the neglect was more the media's than the administration's fault. Here was a President proclaiming himself, and repeatedly proclaimed by his elected successor, to be still the President-in-fact. He was struggling as best he could to bring the American hostages home from Iran, keep the Israeli-Egyptian peace process alive, avert the horrendous crisis that Soviet intervention in Poland would precipitate, and deal with the horrors of murder, extremism, and dissolution in El Salvador. Yet he was able to do very little about these problems, and minimal attention was paid to what he could do and tried to do. Journalists and the public were weary of Jimmy Carter and his doings and his people, crying in many muted ways, "Go, in God's name, go," and turning to the Reagan transition spectacle for relief.

Part of the spectacle became visible only in fragmentary reports of what was happening at the White House and the federal departments and agencies where Reagan transition teams moved in. According to the few spot checks that this reporter had time to make, things went quietly and well at the White House, the Treasury, several agencies. Things went roughly and poorly at State, Defense, and, according to news reports, at Agriculture and the CIA, among others. Pushy and abrasive transitionists, some of them patent self-servers and, in a few instances, industry lobbyists who never should have been on the teams, messed up some of the early relationships. In some measure, this resulted from over-manning and over-organization. Such senior Reagan transition officials as the Washington director, Edwin Meese III, and a fellow Californian, E. Pendleton James, the chief talent-hunter, professed to be extremely proud of the intensive pre-election preparations for Reagan's advent that occurred in secrecy in suburban Virginia. On the organization charts that appeared after the election, in the talk of personnel recruitment planned to the last conceivable detail, it is all very impressive. But there simply is too much of it, it puts too many people on the interim scene, and it makes Edwin Meese's task of coordination and control next to impossible.

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The initial transition situations at the departments of State and Defense are instructive. At both departments, the Reagan operatives failed to foresee the difficulties that were likely to arise and did arise before the two department secretaries were chosen and announced. Thirteen transitionists under William Van Cleave, a hardline California specialist in national security and defense affairs, hit the Pentagon like an invading legion. Governor William Clements of Texas, a former deputy secretary of defense, persuaded incumbent secretary Harold Brown to let him install a retired admiral who'd worked for Clements and who set himself up as a one-man team. Obvious tensions between such pure Reaganites as Van Cleave and more moderate Nixon and Ford veterans under him compounded the confusion. Long-memoried officials recalled that two men, a fellow congressman and a congressional staffer, managed Melvin Laird's replacement of Clark Clifford in 1968. Harold Brown made do with a team of four transitionists in 1976. Now there were Van Cleave's 13, plus the admiral, plus what seemed to harried incumbents to be a swarm of additional advisers and interrogators. Some of them proved to be unauthorized freelancers and were called off after the department complained to Carter transitionist Jack Watson at the White House and Watson complained to Meese. A fundamental source of friction and bad feeling could be removed only after Reagan designated his secretary of defense. Van Cleave and his people demanded, and were refused, superclassified documents and information that Brown would provide only to individuals who were designated by the new secretary as incoming appointees and who could then be given the highest security clearance.

The situation at State was more relaxed but not altogether happy. Robert Neumann, the California academic who headed that transition team, and most of his people struck the Carter-Muskie incumbents as knowledgeable, reasonable people. Anthony Lake, the policy planning director who had headed Carter's DOS transition team in 1976, was determined to do what he could to make this transition as smooth and effective as he thought his own had been. So, one gathers, were Secretary Muskie and other State officials. But there were difficulties, personal and impersonal. At State as at Defense, such highly classified material as contingency plans and the like could be provided only after a new secretary had been designated and in turn had designated incoming subordinates who would be entitled to the necessary clearance. Aggravating leaks from the Reagan team culminated in the disclosure to the *New York Times* of classified reports from the Moscow embassy to the department on Senator Charles Percy's discussions with Brezhnev, Gromyko, and other Soviet officials. Richard V. Allen, Reagan's senior staff adviser on national security, publicly "deplored" and "lamented" this particular leak in remarkably mild terms, but he was said to have taken strong steps in private to rebuke the leakers and prevent a repetition. Here I'll note in passing that Allen, in my opinion, if appointed Reagan's national security adviser at the White House, will serve well as the low-key assistant Reagan says he wants. I'm glad that a critical *Wall Street Journal* story about Allen, and a warmed-over version of it in this journal, don't seem to have impaired Allen's standing with Reagan.

A transition team of 17 people has been assigned to the White House, including the immediate White House Office and the larger Executive Office of the President. Its director is James A. Baker III, who has been designated as Reagan's White House staff chief. His transition deputy is David Gergen, who was brought into the Ford White House by its staff chief, Richard Cheney (now Wyoming's congressman). Baker, Gergen, and their assistants are moving quietly into the Carter operation without, at this writing, upsetting anybody. The announced plans to run the Reagan White House with a duo—Baker as staff chief, Edwin Meese as a counselor with authority over Cabinet relationships and both domestic and foreign policy formulation—have aroused a lot of skepticism. There will be more when it's announced and realized that the Reagan directorate actually will be a triumvirate. Michael Deaver, a California publicist and Reagan intimate, is to be an assistant to the President and deputy to Baker. Deaver will have direct responsibility for a wide range of White House functions, including many that most directly affect the President. Richard Cheney, a wise and experienced White House survivor, has reviewed the plans with Meese and Baker and thinks the arrangement will work well.

THERE IS more, and probably better justified, skepticism over Reagan's talk of setting up an executive committee of four or five principal Cabinet members who would serve as a super-advisory council, maybe with offices in the White House or the adjoining Executive Office Building. Nixon tried something like that in 1972-73 after his reelection and it never even began to work. Caspar Weinberger, a prospective Reagan Cabinet secretary who would have been one of Nixon's elite, advocates a revival of the arrangement. Edwin Meese also plugs it, but with qualifiers suggesting that it may evolve into a more practicable committee of Cabinet seniors who meet intermittently with the President to discuss particular issues and problems. Something like that seems sensible and possible. It would leave the Cabinet members free to run their departments to the extent that any secretary can really run these monstrosities.

At the very start, incidentally, the secretaries and their principal subordinates will have their hands full attending the elaborate briefings and seminars that are planned for them. A good deal more than instruction in the ways of government and Washington is intended. The main purpose is to impress upon the secretaries and all their policy assistants that they have

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been appointed by Ronald Reagan and are working for Ronald Reagan, not for their agencies' constituencies and bureaucrats. It's the fashion in Washington in pre-inaugural December to give Reagan the benefit of every doubt, including a gut-level doubt that he will be any more successful in this endeavor than previous presidents have been.

John Osborne

Politics

The Heritage Model

Besides finding a Democratic national chairman with the organizational skills of Republican chairman Bill Brock, besides raising lots of money and training new candidates at the grassroots level, and besides thinking about a new agenda, the liberal movement in America needs its own counterpart to the conservative Heritage Foundation—a fast-moving, well-financed, highly visible research and propaganda organization capable of analyzing issues from a liberal perspective and getting its product quickly into the hands of members of Congress and the press. The liberal establishment has its think tanks, notably the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment, which traditionally provide refuge for people who have been or aspire to be top Cabinet and subcabinet officers in Democratic administrations. The Republican establishment has the American Enterprise Institute, Stanford's Hoover Institution, and Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies. Such organizations can be depended upon to produce, besides high officials, high policy—lengthy, learned, and often definitive studies on large public policy issues.

But nobody else is quite like the Heritage Foundation—organizationally, functionally, or ideologically. Instead of serving up grand concepts for the executive branch and academia, Heritage has concentrated on short (5,000 to 10,000 word) issue analyses primarily for legislators and their assistants. The subject matter and implicit conclusions of Heritage Issue Bulletins (studies of specific legislation) and Backgrounders (broader issues studies) have a distinct right-wing tilt. Heritage is against the windfall profits tax, fair housing amendments, and hospital cost containment; for higher defense spending, a constitutional amendment on abortion, and energy deregulation. But the research is solid and detailed, the arguments are clear, and the impact on congressional debate and press commentary is impressive. There are a number of liberal organizations that publish newsletters on specific issues—arms control, domestic surveillance, civil rights, and labor—but none cover the entire spectrum of public policy, as Heritage does, and consistently turn out dependable research. Liberals probably didn't need a Heritage Foundation when the Democrats controlled the fact-marshaling machinery of both houses of Congress and the executive. But they do now.

Instead of being staffed with graybeards who address each other as Mr. Secretary, Heritage has 20 or so professionals, all under 40. Most are recent or soon-to-be PhDs earning between $15,000 and $25,000 a year who look forward to advancing to congressional staff jobs rather than walnut-lined slots in the upper bureaucracy. With so many liberals forced out of Senate and administration jobs in the November landslide, it ought to be easy to find comparable or superior brainpower to populate a liberal Heritage. The problem may be in finding people as energetic.

Heritage is also ideologically distinct from the establishment think tanks of the right and left. It is a committed rightist organization, although the Reagan victory, the rightward drift of American public opinion, and the rise of farther-out organizations make it seem far less incendiary and extremist than it might have looked five or even three years ago. One official of a major traditional think tank says that "anything to the right of the Heritage is the fringe." But Heritage's own administrators regard it as "mainstream conservative," representing all the principal strains of US conservatism—the traditional right (William F. Buckley's variety, and also John Ashbrook's and Phil Crane's), economic libertarians (Milton Friedman's kind), the anti-communist and hardline pro-defense right (Ronald Reagan's traditional base), the new right (Phyllis Schlafly, Jerry Falwell, Richard Viguerie and company), and, increasingly, neoconservatives (Irving Kristol's crowd, Pat Moynihan's, and Midge Decter's). Presumably it would be difficult to form a similar alliance of disparate liberal interest groups, since cohesion among them does not exist. But all strains of liberalism wouldn't have to be represented in a liberal Heritage. For one thing, the left-liberal or radical strain already has its own think tank, the Institute for Policy Studies. What's needed is a research factory for Kennedy-Mondale-Jackson-McGovern moderate liberals, where they can fight for consensus and produce critiques of what the conservatives are doing in Congress, within the administration, and at the Heritage Foundation.

Such an enterprise requires an entrepreneur such as Heritage has in Edward J. Feulner Jr., a 39-year-old former Chicagoan who became a conservative in college reading Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, Buckley's *God and Man at Yale*, and Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*. Feulner went on to do graduate work at the London School of Economics and came to Washington as a congressional aide. He served briefly as personal assistant to Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, then returned to the Hill, first as an aide to Representative Phil Crane, then as director of the Republican Study Committee, a consortium of right-

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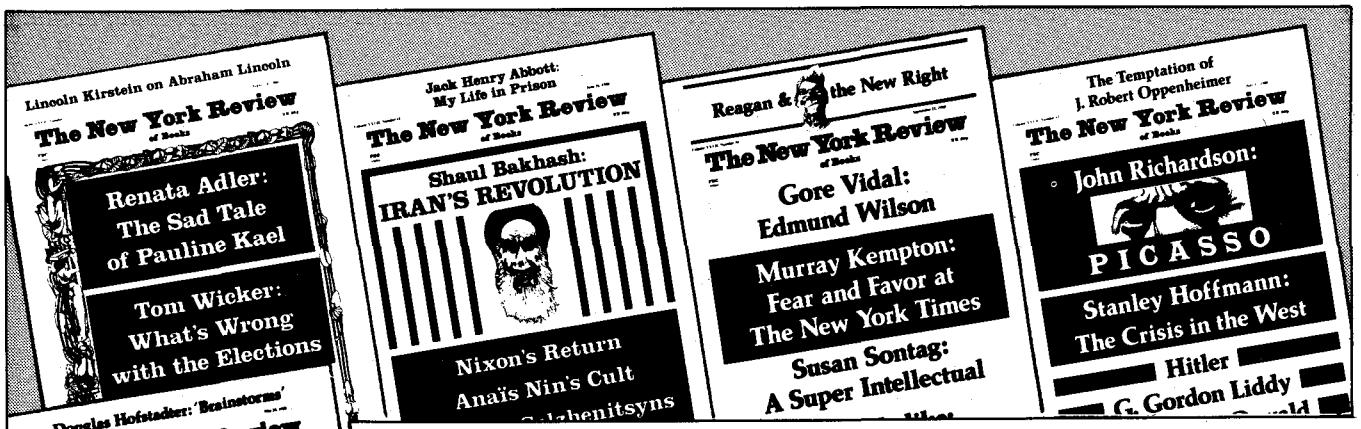
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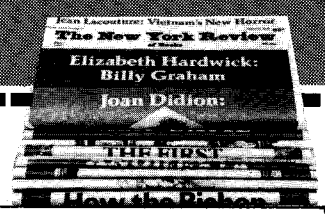

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Keeping an Eye on Smiley's People

President-elect Ronald Reagan has promised to restore American prestige abroad and restrict expansive government power at home. The Heritage Foundation, whose name implies nothing if not a defense of traditional values, has submitted a report to him on how those goals can be achieved. In one crucial area, though, the conservative intellectuals at the Heritage Foundation seek a dramatic extension of government authority. At the moment of Reagan's triumph, with liberals defeated and the left virtually non-existent, they are consumed with high anxiety about subversives.

"The internal security threat today is greater than at any time since World War II," says Sam Francis, a Heritage expert with a doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina and author of the section on internal security in the Heritage report.

Since 1974, there has been a domestic cutback. The House Internal Security Committee has been abolished, the Attorney General's list of subversive groups is no longer extant, and a great many files on subversives have been literally destroyed. Whenever you have that kind of collapse of an internal security apparatus you are going to have subversive types popping up. You have these people prepared to use violence and conspiratorial methods against the United States.

The consequences of inaction in the face of this menace are potentially dire, says Francis. "I'm not going to tell you that the KGB has penetrated the highest levels of the US government. But it is possible. There is nothing to stop them."

The internal security threat emanates from a variety of lethal sources, according to Francis. "First of all, you have a number of active terrorist groups: Iranian, Libyan, remnants of the Weathermen and the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Nazis. Second, you have a vast expansion of Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban diplomatic personnel, large numbers of which are under the control of the KGB. Not everyone knows it and nothing is being done about it. The FBI is handcuffed in dealing with them."

In 1976, in fact, Attorney General Edward Levi imposed new rules on FBI investigations, a reform stemming largely from the exposure of the Bureau's violations of civil liberties in its surveillance of radical groups. The Levi guidelines, as they are known, forbid the FBI from investigating groups unless they have engaged or are believed to be about to engage in criminal activity. "In my view they [the Levi rules] have functioned very well for the Bureau," said FBI director William H. Webster recently.

The Heritage report, however, advocates lifting the Levi guidelines, and

wing legislators. In 1973 he and Paul Weyrich, then an aide to Senator Gordon Allott, agreed on the need for a quick-study research organization for Congress. They contacted right-wing beer brewer Joseph Coors, who provided the group's original seed money of $250,000. Weyrich ran the organization until late 1975, when he left to become a new right political organizer. At that time, Heritage's budget was $743,000. For the next year, the organization was managed by Frank Walton, a California businessman who introduced direct-mail fundraising and ran the budget up to more than one million dollars. Feulner took over in April 1977. Partly owing to his efforts, and partly to Walton's, the 1977 budget was two million dollars. By 1979 it was $4.1 million, including $600,000 to purchase a new building on Capitol Hill and $3.5 million for research and other operations. This year the operations budget will be five million dollars. Next year's will be $5.3 million.

Heritage's biggest contributor is the Scaife Family Trust. Second is Coors, who gives about $300,000 annually—about six percent of Heritage's budget, as opposed to 90 percent in the early years. Other big donors include the Noble Foundation, established with income from an Oklahoma oil and gas fortune, and the John M. Olin Fund, whose president, former treasury secretary William Simon, is on the Heritage board. Heritage gets money from 87 corporations on the *Fortune* 500, according to Feulner. "From the standpoint of the business community, there's no reason why that shouldn't be 487," Feulner says, given Heritage's pro-business, anti-government orientation. He says there are exceptions to consistent alignment with corporate interests, though. Heritage's massive 3,000-page set of recommendations to the incoming administration included a call for elimination of federal subsidies for synfuel development in spite of the fact that a major recipient of subsidies is the Fluor Corporation, whose president sits on Heritage's board and which gives Heritage about $50,000 a year.

Besides corporate and fat cat contributions, Heritage gets small donations of two dollars to $20 from 120,000 people by direct mail. "For the first time," says Feulner, "you have a broadly supported think tank. We're not just Joe Coors's mouthpiece in Washington."

Rather, Heritage is a mouthpiece for the whole conservative movement, and it speaks in many forms. Besides the Issues Bulletins and Backgrounders, Heritage publishes a quarterly, *Policy Review*, which increasingly includes the work of neoconservatives. It also puts out a defense and foreign policy newsletter, *National Security Record*; *International Briefing*, a publication that reports on foreign projects that might be useful in the United States; *Institution Analysis*, which reports on the funding and output of left-wing organizations; *Educational Update*, a new rightish newsletter attacking sex education and other scholastic deviations from traditional morality; and *Critical Issues*, a monograph series on especially complex issues. In addition, Heritage sponsors lecture series, congressional seminars, and briefing sessions for editors, any or all of which are forums liberals might adapt.

One other Heritage feature surely is adaptable and necessary for the revitalization of liberalism. That is its resource bank, its lists of conservative academics, organizations, and experts that can be tapped for Her-

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on this matter Francis expects a favorable hearing within the Reagan administration. "I would guess review of the guidelines would be likely," he says. "Reagan will be receptive." Richard Allen, Reagan's national security adviser, says, "The Heritage report will be seriously read, but that doesn't mean we will sign off on it." Martin Anderson, Reagan's chief domestic affairs adviser, adds, "There are a number of private reports, and we're looking at them." If the Levi guidelines are removed from the books the methods of dealing with the internal security threats enumerated in the Heritage report—surveillance, wiretapping, mail covers, use of informers, breaking and entering—likely will be applied with renewed vigor.

Who, then, would be watched besides foreign agents, Patty Hearst, and Bernardine Dohrn? Subjects would come to mind naturally. "You have to have an ongoing surveillance program," Francis argues. To buttress his point, he read me a clipping from a vintage progressive labor party magazine which extolled "armed struggle." The left wing of the political spectrum, to Francis, consists of "dissidents" and "subversives," but his proposal doesn't cover the former. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to separate run-of-the-mill dissidents from Smiley's people. Consider, for example, the case of the Institute for Policy Studies, a left-wing think tank in Washington, which has become one of the favorite whipping boys of the right. Conservatives charge that assassinated Chilean exile leader Orlando Letelier, who worked at IPS, was a Cuban agent. In addition, a best-selling *roman à clef*, *The Spike*, by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, depicts an institution suspiciously resembling IPS as a cover for Soviet intelligence operations. "I'm the last person to say that everyone at IPS is connected to Cuban or Soviet intelligence," says Francis. "But to my knowledge there has been no intensive private investigation of its foreign intelligence links. It is worth pursuing." For now, he recommends that the Reagan administration keep a wary eye on IPS. "They should be placed under minimal surveillance. I don't think you should tap their phones or break into their offices," Francis says.

Who, then, would make the decisions about who should be spied on? Francis would like Reagan to avoid past mistakes. "If you get Gordon Liddy types, who knows where you will wind up?" says Francis. "If you have a professional staff, you will know where to draw the line." With experts in charge, reason will prevail. This is so clear to Francis that he can't discern why there has been any clamor in the press about the internal security section of the Heritage report. "I am surprised it provoked this much controversy. There's no mention of Joe McCarthy in this report."

Sidney Blumenthal

Sidney Blumenthal is the author of *The Permanent Campaign* (Beacon Press).

itage research or congressional testimony, brought together for conferences, and otherwise kept interlocked. It may have pleased liberals to think for years that the conservative movement consisted merely of small-minded businessmen, troglodyte congressmen, hot-eyed ex-generals, and weird anti-feminists in tennis shoes—plus a few antic intellectuals such as William Buckley, Friedrich Hayek, and Ernest van den Haag. Such illusions are impossible now, in the wake of Reagan's victory. Liberals are discovering to their amazement that a lively out-of-power intellectual right always has existed around such organizations as the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the Philadelphia Society, and the Mont Pelerin Society—not to mention that serious, if misguided, journal, *National Review*. In fact, the intellectual right has grown quite large. Heritage has 1,000 scholars linked into its academic network whom it contacts periodically to supply with material and with requests for ideas. According to resource bank director Willa Johnson, Heritage serves as "a clearinghouse, a conduit, and a catalyst" for conservative intellectuals and activists. A liberal network just as large could be formed, but someone has to do it and begin stimulating new thinking on public policy questions.

All Heritage's intellectuals really have not produced an abundance of original ideas. The one cited most often as a Heritage product is that of low-tax enterprise zones to encourage investment in high-unemployment areas. Even that idea, as it happens, originated in England—and with a Socialist, at that—and was imported here by Heritage staff members. Heritage people claim they are about to produce another novel idea—a scheme for limited energy exploration of wilderness areas.

But Heritage is astoundingly good at packaging and trumpeting conservative proposals in the media. Hardly a week goes by without some major newspaper or magazine publishing a story or an op-ed piece based on a Heritage report. One of the great publicity masterstrokes of the year was Heritage's Mandate for Leadership project, the 3,000-page report to the new administration on what needed to be done to impose conservative government on the country. A forthcoming conservative budget, calling for domestic spending cuts of $50 billion to $60 billion in fiscal 1982, should create a new bonanza of stories. Heritage gets at least as much press attention as AEI even though its budget is half the size of AEI's and its staff includes no ex-presidents or Cabinet members. It remains to be seen what the Reagan administration will do with Heritage's proposals, but they were received enthusiastically enough by Reagan's chief of staff, Ed Meese. It should come as no surprise that 14 Heritage staff and board members made it onto Reagan transition teams. Feulner, in fact, is on the transition executive committee.

What happens to a right-wing think tank when right-wingers take control of the government? Feulner hopes that Heritage will be both a source of new proposals for the administration and its conservative watchdog, setting a conservative policy standard to which the administration could repair. The principles Heritage espouses are beneficent enough—a free market economy, a strong US foreign policy, and less government regulation. But as its big Reagan advisory

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project demonstrated, its specific agenda—and the pressures it will place on Reagan—may be considerably more dangerous. It wants revival of House and Senate internal security committees and a cutback in rules prohibiting unconstitutional behavior by the FBI (see box on page 12). It wants reductions in US food programs and rural development, though not in agricultural subsidies. It uncritically calls for building nearly every weapon ever proposed at the Pentagon. Its education program focuses on looser civil rights enforcement and on measures (tuition vouchers and tax credits) likely to undermine the public schools. It wants to stop public interest law firms from suing the government.

On the liberal side somebody is going to have to challenge these proposals and question whether they and the rest of the right-wing agenda will produce a good and effective society. The unions, civil rights groups, teachers, civil liberties organizations, arms controllers, and others will do their bit, but they will not represent the concerted brainpower of the liberal movement, nor the focused publicity-getting power. It doesn't cost a lot of money to have a first-rate liberal research group. It will take a good deal of enterprise and energy, however.

Morton Kondracke

A Fool and His Money

Does Crime Pay?

If it's money now and we'll-worry-about-the-taxes-later that you're looking for, don't talk to your stockbroker. People lucky enough to have thick wads in their pokes can put their money safely to work earning up to 17 percent over the next year. You may do as well in the market but you won't do it as safely.

Persons with $100,000 can buy themselves a certificate of deposit from the bank. That means you give the bank your hundred grand and for a year, or whatever term you work out, you can't withdraw it. In return they must pay you a stated amount of interest. The amount of that interest is negotiable. Haggle the best interest rate possible out of 'em. Right now that ought to be about 17 percent or $17,000 return on your money. (Incidentally, just because you can't withdraw your money doesn't mean you can't use it. Certificates of deposit are excellent collateral for loans so that if interest rates drop during the term of your certificate of deposit it may pay you to take out a loan against it.)

But for people with less than $100,000, which is almost everybody, there is also money to be made. If you have $10,000, or you have five and a friend has five, buy yourselves a Treasury Bill, which is paying about 14.5 percent interest at this writing. If you don't know how to buy a bill, which is a three- or six-month loan to the government, ask your banker. There is always somebody whose job it is, for a small fee, to buy bills, but you may get put on hold a few times while the lunkheads connect with the proper person.

All this ought to remind us that we are living in a different era from the one we grew up in when it comes to interest rates. In the not-so-distant old days, interest rates moved up or down very slowly and ordinary people didn't pay attention to them. You can't afford to do that now. They bounce around in a way they never did circa 1930-75. So you have to cultivate the habit of shopping for interest rates whenever you're buying anything. For a variety of reasons, the price of money will vary from place to place just like the price of Betamaxes or Cuisinarts.

More than anything else, high prices in money evoke high emotional reactions. People who are disposed to fight to the death against price controls on such essentials as food think controls on money a sensible idea. The idea of money price controls is so old and so well established that we have a special name for them. They're called usury laws. No economic crime gets a worse press than loansharking, i.e., charging high interest rates, even 1,000 percent per year, to bad risks with no collateral.

Yet the amount of money involved in loansharking is trifling compared to the volume of business done by larger and more respectable corporate criminals who don't use clubs and brass knuckles to collect their debts—although in the past they have been known to call on the US Marines. Not long ago (December 1) *Fortune* magazine did a round-up on companies convicted of serious crimes. Soft stuff, like polluting the environment or death in the workplace, was omitted, limiting the survey to "bribery—including kickbacks and illegal rebates—criminal fraud, illegal political contributions and criminal anti-trust violations (price-fixing and bid-rigging)." The conclusions were that in the last decade, "Of the 1,043 major corporations in the study, 117 or 11 percent, have been involved in at least one major delinquency." All cases cited here involved conviction, a consent decree, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, which is about the same as confessing guilt. (For the best recent, authoritative book on the general subject, you might want to read *Corporate Crime*, by Marshall B. Clinard and Peter C. Yeager, Free Press, New York. Not recommended until the holidays are over, however.)

Leaving aside ethical and moral considerations, let's get to the root of the business and ask, does corporate

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Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts

When we last left our mythical investment fund, the stock market was riding the crest of post-election euphoria. The Dow Jones Industrial Average hovered around the 1,000 mark. Then reality set in, with prime rates leaping from 14.5 percent to 20 percent in just over one month and Soviet troops massing on Poland's borders. A few weeks ago the discussion was of a recession past and a bright economic future with Reagan at the helm. Now the talk focuses on international tensions and how severe the coming recession will be. The Dow Jones Average has responded by dropping almost 70 points. And it hasn't been a great month for our portfolio either—with one exception, all our investments have declined in value.

Several of our investments, however, have been front-page news. A Federal Trade Commission judge ordered Beatrice Foods to divest itself of Tropicana Products, the nation's largest citrus juice processor, and, in an unprecedented move, ordered that Tropicana's recent profits be turned over to the US Treasury. (The *New York Times*, never missing an opportunity for a pun, reported that Beatrice's ownership of Tropicana created an illegal, anticompetitive "concentration" in the frozen orange juice business.) Beatrice is appealing the decision, of course, and the process is sure to drag on for years. The FTC had tried to block the acquisition of Tropicana in 1978, but was overturned by higher courts. In any case, our Beatrice bonds actually registered a slight gain due to the fact that they already had suffered a large decline, and no matter what the outcome, Beatrice will remain the nation's largest diversified food company, with Dannon yogurt, La Choy oriental foods, and Clark candy bars under its corporate roof.

Our other newsmaker was Chrysler. President Lee Iacocca called the Federal Reserve's tightening credit policies "madness" and blamed them for ruining Chrysler's hopes for a fourth-quarter profit. (Who does the Fed think it is, anyway, messing around with Chrysler's hopes?) Iacocca journeyed to Washington, hoping that federal coffers hadn't emptied entirely, and announced a cash rebate plan tied to the prime rate. Iacocca's logic: the greater the interest rate, the greater the rebate, thereby overcoming the negative impact of high interest costs. The market remained unimpressed, and our Chrysler bonds took a nosedive.

Our biggest loser of the month was our holding in pork bellies futures. But although it was down significantly this time, our original investment was only $96,000, so we still are left with a healthy 450 percent gain. By the way, the surge in our bellies has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the price of bacon at your grocery store. One pound of bacon went for one dollar in New York shortly before we invested; today it costs about $2.50. Live cattle futures also took a major drop this time, and if they decline much more (about 2½ cents a pound) we will either have to come up with more money or lose our investment.

Our other securities all lost ground since our last round, following the general decline of both the stock and bond markets. But once again, rising interest rates meant a better return from Dreyfus Liquid Assets, our money market fund. We averaged 12.4 percent interest in the last month, or $1,698. In the last week the yield has climbed to 13.5 percent and the end is not yet in sight.

Should we get rid of any of our "dogs" in order to claim a tax loss? Well, so far we haven't sold any of our holdings, so we don't have any gains on which we must pay taxes. Once we sell our pork bellies contracts we'll have a large tax bill, but we're not going to sell them before December 20—six months after we purchased them, when they become long-term capital gains, taxable at a lower rate than short-term gains. And at that point we'll probably be tempted to hold on to them for at least another 12 days in order to defer all taxes to 1982. We'll let you know what happened next time.

With the interest we collected, we now have $239,116 in Dreyfus Liquid Assets to begin round six. This month's selection will be Gulf Oil. Gulf is trading at $44¼, which allows us to buy 2,250 shares for $99,563 with $996 (one percent) going to our broker as commission.

After 24 weeks our portfolio looks like this:

	November 18	December 8
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	$ 78,120	$ 79,980
64 pork bellies futures on margin	664,602	530,112
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	98,280	86,385
140 Resorts International bonds	96,600	91,000
58 live cattle futures on margin	102,776	81,896
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	91,406	84,375
1,640 shares Nucor	118,285	102,910
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	91,515	86,804
2,250 shares Gulf Oil		99,563
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	237,418	138,557
TOTAL	$1,579,002	**$1,381,582**

The score so far (since June 20):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+ 4.0 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+ 6.8 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+38.1 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is vice president of finance and administration of the Media Commentary Council, Inc.

crime pay? If it does, should we be investing our hard-earned drachmas in criminal concerns? No general answer emerges when you go down the list and see the names of so many famous American businesses. Over the long term, who would ever bet against DuPont, a great name on *Fortune*'s "Roster of Wrongdoing"? (You'd expect that title from Ralph Nader but never Time, Inc., which, by the by, is on it through a subsidiary involved in the great price-fixing case in the folding carton industry.) US Steel is on it, but even if they change their name to US Steal, from the investor's point of view that corporate headquarters in Pittsburgh is still a turkey roost.

On a case by case basis, no one industry group seems to dominate the roster, so let's arbitrarily start with the three- and four-time losers, the corporations that would, if they were flesh and blood and not legal fictions, be called recidivists. Take Braniff International: four trips to court in the last 10 years in cases involving slush funds and criminal restraint of trade.

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Although the company president and his glamorous wife, the head of a well-known New York advertising agency, frequently make it into the gossip columns, the airline looks like it is flying straight into the Rocky Mountains. It is almost three quarters of a billion dollars in debt, not always a terrible thing for airlines, except that Braniff is losing money on its operations and is selling off the planes in its fleet to make ends meet. Of course that can only go on so long before the equipment needed to make revenue is gone. It is not paying dividends, needless to add.

Braniff is a victim of free enterprise and its management's bad judgment. When the Civil Aeronautics Board emancipated airlines from route regulation, Braniff, absent any very well thought-out market studies, expanded and expanded at great cost and little revenue. Perhaps management was too busy with its lawyers trying to stay out of jail. Anyhow, in Braniff's case, crime not only didn't pay, it may have contributed to its deficit.

Another four-time loser is the Gulf Oil Company. No corporation has been in trouble more frequently for more serious offenses in the last decade than Gulf. Maybe this is the institutional curse for being a Mellon family-controlled company for so long. Who knows whether they recruit *gonifs* or spot them in the organization and promote them or what, but they've been nailed on rigging uranium prices, giving illegal gifts to an IRS agent, and slush funds for political naughtiness on a scale you wouldn't believe.

At the same time, Gulf, once a major international oil power, has been on the decline. *Everybody's Business*, a new, very useful, and readable almanac on corporate America edited by Milton Moskowitz (Harper & Row), demotes Gulf from its long-held place as one of the Seven Sisters of big oil because it has done so poorly in comparison to outfits like Exxon in recent years. Its dividend is nothing Dean Witter would call good news and the price of the stock has been decidedly pokey, as has everything else about Gulf in recent years.

The causes are complex but the company's worst problem—for the moment forgetting Mellonafactors in the executive suite—has involved getting pushed out of its stupendously profitable Middle East holdings. Exploration to compensate hasn't pulled in much, leaving Gulf stuck with oil reserves in North America that are expensive to pump out of the ground. Nonetheless, this may be a stock for gamblers. The shares are selling for far less than they would if the company closed down and was sold piece by piece on the auction block. But that's not the real reason for considering a flyer on Gulf.

Coming:

Ronald Steel on

Reagan and Human Rights.

Starting around March or April, or even as late as May, a screaming oil shortage should develop. Lines in front of the gas stations, and so on. Consumption will have outrun supply, especially supply from the Middle East. As a consequence, companies with reserves, regardless of how expensive, in safe places like North America are going to look very, very good. It is then that the company's stock, which has been wandering around at about 48 bucks a share, may take off. If that happens, sell once the stock gets up to about $85 a share. Stock prices shoot up fastest and highest not on real profits, but on anticipation, on dreams. So cash in on other people's dreams and move your money on to more interesting places.

For reasons not readily apparent to your Fool, the beverage business appears to have run afoul of the law more frequently than a number of other industry groups. Not all of them made out like bandits. One that decidedly didn't is Schlitz Beer. Laverne and Shirley have left Milwaukee, and the beer that made the town famous is having a terrible time. Once the nation's top seller, Schlitz sinks, sinks, and sinks. The management, whatever its problems with the Justice Department, appears vigorous, intelligent, and hustling, but the beer just don't sell no more.

Another outfit with a lot of legal problems in the last three years is Seagrams, the whiskey people. They're doing all right, but the dividend on the stock is lousy and its price is high. Definitely a no buy.

More interesting is PepsiCo, whose Monsieur Henri subsidiary pleaded guilty last year to bribing a union official, and Anheuser-Busch, which got into trouble with making payments to customers, apparently a frequent practice in the beer business. Both of these are buy possibilities for persons who want to gamble, but not too much. These are both safe stocks. The prices shouldn't drop very steeply. Busch, especially if you buy it around $25 a share, is worth the speculation. In the last five years it's never dropped below $17.50 and it's frequently gotten giddy and gone flitting up into the high 20s and low 30s.

The beer business is not going to Klondike on us and explode. It's what they call a "mature" industry, meaning the trick in this case is to hold on to your customers or steal them away from your competitors, something the makers of the King of Beers are very good at. Aside from that, what makes Busch attractive is they've beaten back the challenge from Miller High Life—I don't care how entertaining those TV commercials are—and soon should be able to raise their prices and ergo their profits.

The PepsiCo proposition isn't quite as alluring. This is a stock the boys and girls on Wall Street used to love, but the affair has ended with a lot of criticism about some of PepsiCo's troubled subsidiaries, such as Pizza Hut. But what you can't deny is their drive and merchandising ability. The less-than-Avis of soda pop has cut the Coca-Cola dominance and its once-great lead in sales so dramatically that it could become Numero Uno

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itself in the next few years. Coke has become the old fogies' drink, but that's also the one drawback Pepsi has. As the population ages, America is getting old-fogy-ized. For gray-haired people who have to pause to be refreshed, Coke may be their drink.

If you haven't done so by the time you read this, talk to your tax person immediately about last-minute moves to cut what you owe. That means it's dog-dumping time. Get rid of those losers, those bad picks among your investments. Only after you've shot the dogs, euthanasia-ized the kitties, qualified for your tax loss, and burrowed into your tax shelter, should you exhale and join the Fool in wishing all a happy holiday and a very, very prosperous New Year.

Nicholas von Hoffman

Nicholas von Hoffman is a syndicated columnist.

Protectionism for the World Car.

The Two Faces of Ford

Cape Canaveral

When Ford Motor Company decided to hold its annual year-end press conference at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the affair was expected to be an hour of triumph. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration had set December 4 as the date for the launch of the most powerful communications satellite in history, built by Ford's aerospace subsidiary. What better way to illustrate Ford's imagination, engineering superiority, and commitment to technological progress? What better way to polish the image of a corporation tarnished by huge financial losses, million-dollar lawsuits arising out of dangerously defective Ford products, and an embarrassing inability to fend off a competitive challenge from Japan? So the invitations went out to hundreds of journalists all over the world to come and witness Ford's ascent into the heavens. And it wouldn't cost them or their employers a cent: Ford would provide air fare, hotel accommodations, meals, even a free pair of Bushnell binoculars with which to view the launch.

On December 3 and 4, nearly 200 reporters, some of them with photographers and cameramen in tow, descended upon Cocoa Beach to enjoy the hospitality of the nation's second-biggest auto maker. Most of them were from the US, but 60 or so hailed from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America—places where Ford cars are as well known as at home. The reporters were provided a hearty lunch at the Holiday Inn, given the chance to hear and question the chairman of Ford and the president of its aerospace subsidiary, and escorted through an afternoon tour of the space center. Finally, as night fell, they were loaded onto buses, driven across the bridge to Cape Canaveral, and deposited only a few hundred yards away from the launch pad, where a huge white rocket, gleaming in the floodlights, stood waiting to be catapulted into the sky. But Ford's triumph was not to be. After one postponement and more than an hour of waiting, NASA announced that because of a minor mechanical problem the launch had been postponed, at least until the next evening and possibly longer. So the assembled members of the press were loaded back onto the buses and transported back to the Holiday Inn for a cocktail party and a gloomy evening of drinking, accompanied by a vaguely Hawaiian musical troupe. Most of the journalists left the next day, as originally planned, and only a handful hung around until Saturday evening, when the launch finally took place.

Ford's executives may be forgiven for any doubts they have about the existence of a just God. Certainly the company is long overdue for a triumph, having had hardly anything but setbacks in the last three years. Last year Ford lost a quarter of a billion dollars, and this year its losses on North American car and truck sales will exceed a billion and a half dollars. The company is living under the threat of being ordered to recall 16 million vehicles to repair an alleged defect which causes the transmission to slip from park to reverse. Ford already has lost several lawsuits over injuries and deaths caused by cars backing over people. The widower of one victim was awarded $4.4 million in compensatory and punitive damages. If the recall is ordered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, it would be the biggest and most expensive recall ever, with a price tag of as high as $600 million. Coming on the heels of the highly publicized scandal involving Ford's knowing failure to fix a defect in the gas tanks of its Pinto line, the recall also might badly damage Ford's reputation among consumers.

The question reporters at Cape Canaveral asked each other, though, was why a corporation losing billions of dollars would throw away good money to entertain and impress the news media. Until this year, the annual press conference had been held in Detroit, with somewhat less fanfare. Certainly there is nothing in your introductory economics textbook to explain the incongruity. Ford is no Chrysler, but there is a genuine chance that it too could be forced to the brink of bankruptcy, and not in the distant future. By all logic the company should be ruthlessly eliminating every line in the budget that isn't absolutely crucial to future success. Certainly wining and dining reporters should be high on the cut list.

Judged by conventional economic logic, the whole self-promoting conclave makes no sense. What they don't tell you in Economics 1, however, is that once the modern corporation reaches late middle age, it becomes as much a political institution as an economic one. It serves several purposes deemed useful by the state—

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providing jobs, protecting national prestige, helping to maintain a healthy trade balance, and of course even doing direct government contracting. The corporation is also expected to further other government objectives that it may not find all that appealing, such as providing investment in depressed areas and hiring minority employees, but in exchange it is assured that the government will take some interest in its prosperity and, as with Lockheed and Chrysler, its survival. Many companies, of course, find it possible to thrive by concentrating their resources on satisfying their customers, as the economics texts say they are supposed to. But many, unable or unwilling to accept the risks that go with vigorous competition, prefer to devote a lot of their attention to manipulating government policies for their own benefit.

Ford is a good example of this phenomenon. For most of its history, the company had defended the principle of free trade, choosing to take its chances in the competitive arena rather than rely on government solicitude. But that position turned out to be expendable as soon as Ford stopped winning the competition. Ever since the 1979 gasoline shortage struck, causing a devastating shift in consumer demand for American auto makers, Ford has been insisting that the government take steps to keep out imports from Japan. Chrysler, American Motors, and the United Auto Workers all have echoed the demand; only General Motors, the healthiest of the group, has resisted the temptation.

FORD HAS missed no opportunities to argue its case for protectionism. "The Japanese producers . . . have taken a windfall advantage of the abrupt market shift by massively stepping up exports to the US," the company said in a petition for relief to the International Trade Commission. "This action has created an unacceptable imbalance in trade and jobs between two of the world's most important trading partners." To defuse the suspicion that Ford is only looking to save its own skin, company chairman Philip Caldwell frequently argues that the entire country is threatened by the surge in imported cars. "When we allow our basic industries, including autos, steel, aluminum, rubber, and glass, to be weakened by unequal foreign competition—or by shortsighted domestic policies—we are endangering our US security capability," Caldwell warned in a recent speech. Unfortunately for Ford, neither the Carter administration nor the International Trade Commission has been persuaded. Carter has refused to request protectionist laws from Congress or to ask the Japanese to reduce their exports "voluntarily," and the ITC has concluded that the US industry's problems were caused less by the Japanese than by the shift in consumer demand (which spurred sales of small American cars as well as imports) and by the recession.

Ford's plea for protection in its home market contrasts not only with the company's traditional support of free trade, but also with its latest advertising theme. Every time you turned around at the Florida gathering, you were reminded that Ford is the "World Car Company." All of the press releases were printed on stationery trumpeting "News from the World of Ford," complete with a small globe covered with assorted flags. At the press conference, Caldwell said the presence of so many foreign reporters "affirms Ford's global interests," and he made much of the success Ford has had in overseas markets (it sells more cars outside its home market, for example, than any other auto maker in the world). The World Car Company came out with the World Car just a few weeks ago, the Ford Escort/Mercury Lynx that you've seen in television and magazine ads draped in various flags. Other Ford advertisements for non-World cars use the same theme. A Granada magazine advertisement, for example, features a silver globe hanging over a silver car, which is said to be "built for a changing world."

THIS ADVERTISING campaign is a clever attempt to identify Ford with the growing popularity of imports, even while exploiting nationalistic prejudice. The main idea seems to be to persuade potential buyers that the Escort is just as good as an imported car, since it was designed by "engineering teams from America and overseas . . . with better ideas from around the world." Certainly this is a change from the days when Japanese products were synonymous with shoddy quality. Here the object is to convince the customer that he needn't be leery just because this is an American car. At the same time, Ford tries to appeal to patriotism. Its slogan "Built to Take on the World" implies that in some way we are at war with those countries so rash as to provide us with a product we want. An advertising brochure stresses that "Escort will be made in America for American drivers," which might be taken as a suggestion that only un-American drivers buy cars made anywhere else.

All this is intended to get Ford back to good health, and it may succeed. The Escort has been a great success, despite a base price of more than $6,000. In October and November Ford sold nearly 50,000 Escorts and Lynxes, and dealers can't keep up with demand. This fall's other celebrated entry, the Chrysler K-car, has not done nearly so well. Actual sales in the first two months of production were well below what Chrysler had projected, and on December 9 the company said it would close two of its K-car plants for three weeks.

But even with the Escort doing well, Ford is still in serious trouble. In the third quarter of 1980, it sold only two-thirds as many cars and trucks as in the third quarter of 1979, and worldwide sales were down 24 percent. Things are bound to improve next year, but Caldwell is predicting sales of about 10 million cars, not a large increase over the roughly nine million that Ford will sell this year.

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So the only other hope for Ford is that the government will step in and help by putting a quota on Japanese imports. That would help in two ways. First, it would force some buyers who would prefer a Japanese car to buy an American car instead. Hence Ford would sell more cars. Second, it would tend to raise the price of Japanese cars and thus permit the US auto makers to raise their own prices without fear of being undercut. Hence Ford would be able to make more money on each car sold. Some experts doubt that import restrictions would help the domestic companies all that much, since most buyers can postpone purchases and since the biggest obstacle to new car purchases these days is the high cost of credit.

But Ford is certain that imports are the source of its troubles, and that only Washington can stem the tide. In this light the get-together at Cape Canaveral begins to make sense. If Ford were competing under laissez-faire capitalism, it would have little choice but to impose the most severe discipline on itself, to squeeze every ounce of production out of its dwindling resources. But the people running Ford know that there are easier ways to stay afloat, and the easiest of all is to get government protection from competition. To get that, a company doesn't need to cut costs or improve efficiency. Instead it needs to get its views reported sympathetically, to make its accomplishments known, and to gain an image as a dynamic, forward-looking corporation which will set the world on fire if only, *if only* the government will just help it through this one crisis, which of course is not its own fault. Instead of concentrating on making a better product, you spend a lot of time and money on public relations. Looking like a deserving recipient, after all, is half the battle of getting government help. Ford's gathering last week would have served all these purposes beautifully—except for the small matter of the postponed launch. After all Ford's efforts to make up for its own failures as a producer with imaginative public relations, it was only fitting that last week even the public relations flopped.

Stephen Chapman

From bombers and missiles to minerals.

Comrade Glagolev's Gap

The lowdown on the Kremlin's next step toward world hegemony is on sale in Washington for the modest sum of $100. That's the going price for two hours with an aging Soviet defector named Igor Glagolev, who claims to have a corner on the Russians' plot to control the world's supply of key "strategic" minerals. Under the plan, says Glagolev, who fled his job with the Soviet Academy of Science four years ago, South Africa and neighboring Namibia will be invaded by tanks from Soviet-backed Angola and Mozambique to secure key minerals such as cobalt, chromium, and manganese. "This is not a theoretical discussion anymore," says Glagolev. "It is a very practical instruction for immediate aggressive action. . . . I heard these instructions many times from representatives of the Soviet government."

Like the bomber gap and missile gap of yesteryear, the strategic minerals gap is gaining wide currency in Washington. The incoming Reagan administration has assigned a large transition task force—including the obligatory gaggle of academics, former military officers, and captains of industry—to make recommendations on the subject. Candidate Reagan, asked by Walter Cronkite whether he would use military force to protect foreign materials such as "chrome from Zimbabwe and South Africa," answered reassuringly, "Well, again, we can't have military force without chrome, we can't have our automobiles, and we can't have airplanes or anything else. I don't know that military force is necessary."

Although the kind of conspiratorial right-wing alarms spawned by Glagolev's spiel are pooh-poohed by most experts, the imbalance between East and West in mineral dependency is real enough. While the Soviet Union until now has relied almost entirely on its domestic supply, the US dependency on foreign supplies has grown steadily since the Korean War. In 1950 only four of 13 key strategic minerals were imported into the US in quantities of 50 percent or more; today nine are imported in quantities of more than 90 percent. The EEC countries rely totally on imports for 10 of these minerals and Japan for 11.

But although the Russians for the first time appear to be moving into the international market as buyers of these so-called strategic minerals—rather than the sellers they have always been—and although they continue to support national liberation struggles in southern Africa, observers at the CIA, NSC, and the State Department find no real evidence of a concerted Soviet strategy to cut off the West from its supplies. When we posed Glagolev's plot to the CIA minerals expert he giggled into the phone.

In Washington, though, the mining industry is already using the "minerals gap" to campaign against environmental laws restricting minerals exploration. On Wall Street financial advisers are offering speculators a ton or two of titanium (excellent for submarine hulls) or a bar of antimony (good for bullets, shrapnel, and camouflage paint) instead of Krugerrands as a hedge against inflation. Until this year the military establishment has been reluctant to use the "minerals gap" as a fundraising tool when more easily understood "gaps" about bombers and missiles were readily at hand.

No longer. On November 13 General Alton Slay,

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chief of the Air Force Systems Command, did his best to scare members of the House Armed Services Committee by warning that "only a few more nations would have to fall under Soviet influence for the elements of a [communist] supercartel to coalesce." Brandishing a map of Africa entitled "Persian Gulf of Minerals," with shaded patches for "Marxist controlled nations," the general reminded the committee what Brezhnev is supposed to have told Somali president Siad Barre in Prague in 1973: "Our aim is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the West depends: the energy treasure of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure of Central and Southern Africa."

General Alexander Haig, former NATO supremo and now president of United Technologies (makers of jet fighter engines, among other things) told the House Interior Mines and Mining Subcommittee in September: "Personally I have long been troubled by what is rapidly becoming a crisis in strategic and critical minerals. . . ." New policies are needed urgently, he said, to free the United States from third world "resource battlegrounds."

IN A CLOSED hearing earlier this year, subcommittee chairman Representative Jim Santini of mineral-rich Nevada extracted a confession about the "minerals gap" from the Defense Department's high-tech boffin, Dr. William Perry, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering. Perry, according to Santini, admitted his department had ignored the issue for too long. "At last," Santini said later, "the Department of Defense has dropped the 'don't worry' banalities and admitted we are in bad shape with certain strategic minerals."

In the same hearings, a leading steel industry representative, E. F. Andrews of Allegheny Ludlum Industries, told Santini's committee, "We have seen cartels formed in the oil business and I truly believe that there are several other commodities potentially cartelable [sic]." In an interview with the *Pittsburgh Press* Andrews conjured up the specter of a Russian submarine blockade of the sea lanes surrounding southern Africa. Without chrome from that region, Andrews noted, "We'd have to go back to eating pickles out of a wooden keg."

This is surely the kind of plain talk Wall Street operators understand. Recently two companies, one on each side of the Atlantic, took up the challenge. In London the Strategic Metals Corporation gave $10,000-plus investors a chance to hold vault receipts for security-bonded barrels of chromium, cobalt, columbium, indium, magnesium, rhodium, and tungsten. In New York James Sinclair, a precious metals broker, is selling investors a lavishly produced booklet (cost: $235 a year) with official government charts of strategic metals sources of supply. Sinclair advises: "I believe that since governments have so far failed to recognize this impending crisis, it behooves us as citizens to do so. If the Soviet strategem of mineral starvation is played out to the full, it is better that citizens own materials that are critical to our national defense. . . ." In a November investment newsletter (cost: $125 a year) Sinclair urged, "Every investor with $100,000 capital should have a minimum $15,000 in strategic metals and critical materials."

Investors also were alerted to America's apparent minerals peril in an August 21 *Washington Star* story headlined "The Strategic Materials Gap." Daniel James, described by the *Star* as a "Washington-based journalist," exclaimed: "The dangers are obvious. When are U.S. leaders going to start taking them seriously?" A few weeks later, the American Geological Institute, which claims to represent more than 50,000 geologists and other earth scientists, warned that the US "is in a resource war, conducted by the Soviet Union, whose objective is to interrupt or deny this country access to strategic and critical materials." Investors may not have noticed that the press spokesman for the institute was Daniel James, the author of the *Star* article.

The *Washington Post*, however, took exception to the geologists' report. It provided "no specifics to support the allegation," the *Post* noted. "Is there a resource war? . . . Has the Soviet Union in fact adopted a conscious strategy to deny access to mineral imports?"

The "minerals gap" may be a new political phenomenon, but scare stories of the "minerals gap" are not. In 1978, when the Soviet-backed Katangese rebels invaded the cobalt-rich Shaba Province of Zaire, stories in the Western press suggested the rebels were out to destroy the mines and the Soviet Union had cunningly made preemptive purchases of cobalt; neither was true. More recently, the Soviet Union has purchased some chromium from Khomeini's Iran, a move signaled by *Business Week* as an "ominous shift" in Soviet minerals-purchasing policy. Indeed, the amount imported, 20,000 tons, seemed like a lot to the lay reader, but in fact it is less than one-tenth of one percent of the 1979 total world production. In the same article, the Russians were said to be stockpiling another key strategic mineral, titanium. Further evidence of a new policy? Perhaps, but as Steven Warnecke, a Columbia University minerals expert, points out, "Titanium is imported from Australia, a western country with the discretion of refusing to sell to the USSR." In a letter to *Business Week* Warnecke went on, "In addition . . . the Soviet Union may not be a net exporter of raw materials in the future, [but] the share of resources that will be imported will certainly be too small to allow her to challenge the market power of her western colleagues."

A recent research paper prepared by the Congressional Research Service for private circulation among legislators also strongly discounted the likelihood of third world mineral producers forming OPEC-type cartels against the US and other consuming nations. CRS specialist Dr. James E. Mielke wrote:

> In contrast to the OPEC countries, the metal exporting countries do not have an excess of funds which can per-

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mit them to withhold or reduce supply for an indefinite period of time. In addition the much more divergent economic, political, historical and cultural backgrounds of the mineral exporting nations tend to reduce their chances for sustaining a successful cartel.

What the minerals gap seems to boil down to is the imagined strength we attribute to our adversaries. As a minerals expert in the State Department's Africa Bureau put it, "Now the Russians are importing where they formerly exported. That drives up prices. But to jump from there to saying they have a plot to deny the West access requires a certain leap of faith most observers are reluctant to take. All one can say is that the Russians have proved they can play the game in the international market." In short, the minerals gap is the Soviets' problem as much as anybody else's.

Mark Hosenball
Peter Pringle

Mark Hosenball is a Washington reporter for Fairchild Publications. *Peter Pringle* is Washington correspondent for the *Sunday Times* of London.

El Salvador's tailspin.

The Bloodbath Beckons

The murders of six prominent opposition leaders and four North American missionaries in El Salvador during the past two weeks have demolished the Carter administration's strategy for averting open civil war in that country. The first massacre, carried out by the extreme right in apparent cooperation with government security forces, claimed virtually the entire leadership of the Revolutionary Democratic Front, a broad coalition of left and center-left opposition groups. The victims were the men upon whom Washington had staked its hopes for a negotiated settlement to El Salvador's deepening political crisis. The last chance for political compromise died with them—a consequence that was probably their executioners' intent.

There is strong evidence that government forces also were complicit in the recent murders of three Catholic nuns and a lay missionary, two of whom were raped before being shot in the head. Publicly, the State Department will say only that there are "indications" of involvement by government forces; privately, US officials say the evidence leaves little doubt of such involvement.

The suspension of fiscal year 1981 economic and military aid pending the outcome of an investigation into the deaths of these four Catholic women is the first sanction the Carter administration has levied against the Salvadoran government, the first crack in a year-long policy of support. Though the suspension is partial (fiscal year 1980 aid already "in the pipeline" will not be affected), it represents a tacit admission that the regime in San Salvador is not the moderate reformist government portrayed in Foggy Bottom's press releases.

A year of diplomatic cajoling and $90 million in foreign aid have not managed to force the Salvadoran government into the centrist mold envisioned for it by Washington. Even US officials now concede that the government's security forces have been responsible for much of the violence racking the nation—a reality they steadfastly had refused to acknowledge heretofore, though the murders of the past fortnight are only the most recent and dramatic crests in a wave of right-wing violence that began to swell after the US presidential election.

At this point, there is little the Carter administration can do to arrest El Salvador's tailspin into civil war. Ronald Reagan's staunch anti-communism, his attacks on Carter's human rights policy, and his advisers' promises of increased military aid have convinced the right in El Salvador that they will have a friend in the White House. They feel they no longer need to curry favor with Jimmy Carter. The day after US investigators questioned senior Salvadoran military officers about the missionaries' deaths and warned them that the rightist offensive must come to an end, those same officers removed the one remaining progressive, Colonel Adolfo Majano, from the five-member governing junta.

As the incoming administration surveys the ruins of Carter's policy, it should be wary of the facile conclusion that the policies of reform and human rights produced the chaos in El Salvador. The Carter administration could not stem the rising tide of violence because it never was able to translate its reformist rhetoric into reality.

In October 1979 the right-wing military government of General Humberto Romero was ousted by a coalition of progressive military officers and civilian leaders who promised socioeconomic reform and political democratization. This new government became the first test case in Washington's grand design for stability in Central America. By rallying moderates to the cause of peaceful reform, the Carter administration hoped to engineer incremental change, dissipate popular pressures for revolution, and thereby avoid "another Nicaragua."

Unfortunately, divisions within the Salvadoran officers corps prevented the October government from carrying out its promises. Right-wing officers resisted every significant reform; progressive officers refused to risk the unity of the armed forces by challenging their right-wing brethren. The result was governmental paralysis.

In December the civilians within the government confronted the officers, demanding the resignation of

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key conservatives and the implementation of promised reforms. The officers refused, the civilians resigned, and the government moved sharply to the right. But the policy of the United States did not change. After refusing to weigh in on the side of the reformers during the December crisis, the Carter administration professed to see no significant difference between the governments of October and January. The flow of economic and military aid continued, justified by claims that the regime still was a government of moderates beset by extremists of both the left and right.

The moderation of the January government always has been more chimerical than real. Its policy of "reform with repression" has been far more repressive than reformist. Over the past year, the most ferocious campaign of violence El Salvador has seen in half a century has taken the lives of 9,000 people—the vast majority of them killed by government security forces.

THE GOVERNMENT did manage, however, to press two reforms: the nationalization of the banks and the much touted agrarian reform, both undertaken reluctantly last spring as the price of continued US support. Phase One of the agrarian reform nationalized large, mostly uncultivated plantations. Implemented by the armed forces, Phase One provided convenient cover for a military campaign against peasant political organizations in the countryside. Phase Three, the "Land to the Tiller" project (modeled on its South Vietnamese predecessor), gave sharecroppers ownership of their land. How many illiterate peasants are aware of the decree even now is open to question. Phase Two, the heart of the reform, would nationalize the profitable coffee plantations, which constitute the core of the landed oligarchy's accumulated wealth. It never has been implemented, and US officials admit privately that it will not be any time in the foreseeable future.

The triumph of repression and the failure of reform in El Salvador are traceable to the fact that the appearance of power and the reality of power do not coincide. Though the *de jure* government includes civilians from the conservative wing of the now splintered Christian Democratic party, real power lies with the armed forces. Within the officers corps are three political tendencies: the progressives, who overthrew Romero in October 1979; the right, which dominates the current regime; and the ultra-right, which is linked to the infamous death squads.

Since July the progressives have been stripped of their commands, and several of their leaders have been assassinated. When the leadership of the Revolutionary Democratic Front was murdered, the most prominent progressive, Colonel Majano, slipped quietly out of the country lest he too be assassinated by the far right. He returned a week later, only to be removed from the government. Rendered powerless, the remnants of the progressive officers group now is debating whether to leave the army, perhaps to join the left.

The ultra-right within the officers corps advocates a war of extermination against the communists, by which they mean those who favor any sort of reforms. When the agrarian reform was announced last spring, the ultra-right began assassinating members of the government and twice tried to overthrow it. But as the regime itself has moved to the right over the past six months, the death squads have returned to their traditional practice of murdering peasants, trade unionists, and clerics.

The balance of power now lies with the right-wing officers who blocked the reforms of the October government, but have been willing to preside over more limited reforms at the insistence of the United States. Their principal objective is the military defeat of the left, and as their meager enthusiasm for reform has waned, an unholy alliance has evolved with the ultra-right: the death squads operate with impunity while the government preserves deniability.

While it may be true that the present government cannot control its own security forces or the death squads, the *de facto* government of right-wing officers can; it is simply unwilling to. When Major Robert D'Aubuisson attempted to overthrow the government from the right last May, he was arrested and then released. Another abortive plot in July was headed by the vice minister of defense; no action was taken against him either. Dozens of Christian Democrats have resigned from the government over the past year, and the one common theme in all their letters of resignation has been the unwillingness of the military high command to control ultra-right violence.

Until now, the Salvadoran government has maintained the charade of a "rogue military" for international consumption. The current wave of violence by the ultra-right and the removal of Majano from the junta suggest that the rightist officers now may be prepared to drop this masquerade in order to get on with their war against the left. If this is the case, the Christian Democrats soon will follow Majano out of the government. Such a development would not represent a coup against the government from the right; rather it merely would be the culmination of a coup that has been occurring by degrees from within the government since last December.

Arrayed against the regime is a broad spectrum of ideologically diverse groups which the United States has portrayed as a "Pol Pot" left—a phrase which represents a true triumph of public relations. In fact, the left opposition includes the Catholic church, a middle-class center-left, the grassroots "popular organizations" of the urban and rural poor, and four guerrilla armies.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front unites the social democratic center-left with the popular organizations, some of which originally were organized by the church and whose ideology can best be characterized as a homegrown amalgam of Marxism and liberation theology. The Farabundo Marti Front for Nation-

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al Liberation unites the four guerrilla armies, which span the ideological spectrum of Marxism from Trotskyist to Castroist to orthodox Marxist-Leninist.

The left's greatest weakness is its heterogeneity. Ideological conflicts between the Revolutionary Democratic Front and the guerrillas, and among the guerrillas themselves, have made it impossible for the left to forge the sort of cooperation necessary to launch a frontal assault on the regime. It is difficult, however, to assess the US claim that the left has lost support since July. Internal problems unquestionably have caused some erosion of support, but the intensification of repression also has decimated the left's cadres, making massive public demonstrations more difficult and more dangerous to stage than they were a year ago.

The political violence that has polarized left and right in El Salvador has left the Carter administration efforts to construct a centrist solution in rubble. The edifice, which never progressed much beyond the facade, crumbled not because Carter tried to engineer social reform but because he thought it could be built without a foundation of popular support. In the final analysis, Carter's policy failed because the United States could not bring itself to abandon its traditional allies on the right, and never could muster the influence to force these guardians of the status quo to break decisively with the past.

EL SALVADOR'S political crisis now will be settled by force of arms. Either the right will triumph by reenacting the bloodbath of 1932 when 30,000 died in the suppression of a peasant revolt, or the left will win by defeating the armed forces on the battlefield. Neither eventuality will be pleasant for the United States. The sort of government that would follow a guerrilla victory will depend upon how protracted the conflict is. At best it would resemble Nicaragua, but it could be much worse. The guerrillas in El Salvador are more radical and less predictable than the Sandinistas, and if the left triumphs by force of arms, the men who hold the guns will hold the power.

Ideally the interests of the United States would be served best by some sort of negotiated settlement between the center-right within the government (e.g., the Christian Democrats and progressive officers) and the center-left within the opposition (e.g., the Revolutionary Democratic Front). This is the sort of solution the Carter administration was trying to construct when the ultra-right assassinated the Revolutionary Democratic Front's leadership. With all hope for a centrist solution now gone, the choice in El Salvador may come down to a choice between fascism and communism. It is not much of a choice for US policymakers.

If Ronald Reagan pursues the policies his advisers have outlined for El Salvador, he will increase military aid, abandon the quest for reform, and subordinate human rights concerns to the war against the left. Apart from the moral issue of whether the United States ought to finance the sort of bloody crusade the right envisions, this policy has considerable costs and major risks.

Economically and strategically, Mexico is the most important country in Latin America for the United States. Any expanded US military role in El Salvador will immediately antagonize Mexico, which opposes current US policy and is sympathetic to the left. Mexico, which sees Central America as more properly its own backyard than ours, simply does not believe the neo-domino theory being purveyed by Reagan's advisers. An expansion of our role in El Salvador also would threaten our relations with Venezuela, Panama, and Costa Rica—the key regional actors that have supported our policy thus far. Even our North Atlantic allies are on record opposing such a policy. In an unabashed alignment with the Salvadoran right, Guatemala and Honduras are the only regional allies the United States would have.

There is also real danger of regional war engulfing all of Central America. Guatemala has threatened to intervene in El Salvador if the left appears to be winning. The Guatemalan left certainly would escalate its internal war under such circumstances, and it is difficult to imagine Nicaragua standing by. If Nicaragua should become embroiled in a regional war, it would have no choice but to ask for Cuban aid, and Cuba would provide it.

In assessing the real and potential costs of the policy Reagan's advisers suggest, one must remember that massive arms transfers may not succeed in pacifying El Salvador. Arms transfers surely will call forth an escalation of arms shipments to the left from its international allies, thereby increasing the level of violence but not necessarily ending the current military stalemate. A dissent document recently prepared by analysts within the US government warns that the left's strength already makes it "highly unlikely" that the guerrillas can be defeated without a protracted war.

The danger, then, is that the United States will find itself drawn progressively deeper into a military conflict that will be brutish but will not be short. Are we to purge ourselves of the "Vietnam syndrome" by once again enlisting on the side of a morally bankrupt government that has no popular support, by incrementally escalating our commitment and investing our prestige until we convince ourselves that a defeat for the Salvadoran government is a defeat for the United States? As Ronald Reagan contemplates the ways in which he hopes to transform America over the next four years, let him recall the fate of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society when Johnson's presidency became entangled in the jungles of Vietnam.

William M. LeoGrande

William M. LeoGrande is director of political science in the School of Government and Public Administration at American University.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Happiness

David O. Selznick's Hollywood is a pleasant surprise. Its folio size, its fold-out title page, its copper-sheeted and peephole part-pages make it look like the ultimately inflated offspring of all the lush film books of the last 15 years. It's so heavily illustrated—1,500 photographs, 450 of them in color—that the double-columned text seems only a layout afterthought to separate the pictures. The idea obviously was to do a lavish production about a lavish producer; but to start to read the book, even to look carefully at the well-integrated pictures, is to detect real substance, which keeps getting stronger. Like so many of Selznick's films, this book about him is decently crafted and highly enjoyable. (Published by Knopf. $75 until December 31; $85 thereafter.)

The author, Ronald Haver, director of film programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, spent 12 years scouring archives and interviewing survivors of the Selznick years, some of whom no longer survive. Thomas Ingalls, the book's designer who gets billing on the title-page, must have been working on it an inordinately long time, too. It can't be called a beautiful book: some of the color photos—Ingrid Bergman and Rhonda Fleming, for instances—are harsh. But its lavishness, even its garishness, are part of its being: and the many photos, a lot of which are new to me, form a concurrent text, supporting and supported by the written text. (One of my favorite shots: D. W. Griffith, aged 70 and finished, on the set of *Duel in the Sun* to visit two people—Lillian Gish and Lionel Barrymore—whom he had launched in films 33 years earlier.)

Haver tells us in the preface that he has seen *Gone with the Wind* over 145 times. Aside from making us wonder when he had time to research and write the book, the fact is another dank portent that the book has to, and does, overcome. He says in his first line that he hasn't written a biography of Selznick or a critique of the films but a history of the career, and so far as that distinction can be maintained, it's true. I could have wished for even less critical comment—it's not Haver's strength—and for more biography. For example, Selznick got into films because his father had gone into them; but his father's transition from jeweler to film producer is only sketched, apocryphally, which seems a bit offhand for a matter so important to the subject's life. Still, the book, text and pictures, is a developed piece of work.

Before I get into what it develops, some reservations. The quality of the writing fluctuates like a seismograph in turbulence. Much of it is competent, sometimes it's even fluent; some of it is cobbled, and occasionally it's painful. ("These were the men who built the industry; they had their eye upon the whole and not just the doughnut.") Some of the opinions are shaky. All major films before *Duel in the Sun*, Haver says, especially those that approached its costs, "had served up the tried-and-true virtues of the time, telling stories that left no doubt in the viewer's mind as to just who and what was right and wrong." How about—to name only the one of which the end of *Duel* reminds me—*Greed*?

I spotted only a few errors. In a photo of a story conference for *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Maxwell Anderson is misidentified as George Abbott. In a photo of the 1930/1931 Oscar ceremonies, the man called Max Ree, an art director, looks to me like Charles Curtis, then the vice president of the US. On one page we're told that *Cimarron* "had cost nearly $1.5 million, but it grossed only $1.38 million." Five pages later we're told that "RKO's biggest success, both commercially and artistically, was *Cimarron*. . . ."

Now for the good news, which, like the book, is plentiful. Text and pictures spill out the story of a man born at exactly the right time. It's chilling to think what would not have happened if some great figures—say, Sergei Eisenstein or Max Reinhardt—had been born 25 years earlier or later. Selznick is not in that league, but the very aptness of his date of birth helped him, too, to fertility and fulfillment. He was born in 1902, just as the film business was being launched, was (virtually) born into that business, and came of age just as Hollywood was exploding. The whole dearly hugged American mythology of Hollywood corruption, of selling out, had absolutely no meaning or inhibition for him. He was in love with films as soon as he was old enough to know it, and was in love with the way they were and could logically grow: he had no ambition to do anything but the same things, better.

He was a markedly intelligent and energetic boy who, at the age of 14, went after school every afternoon to work in his father's New York office and who wrote capsule comments on films and directors for his father. Haver says nothing about Selznick and col-

Films Worth Seeing

From the Life of the Marionettes. Ingmar Bergman's first work in German continues to grapple with great mysteries. Not his best film, but the work of a genius.

Kagemusha. As above, not Akira Kurosawa's best film, but the work of a genius. His view of war in 16th-century Japan is Homeric.

Raging Bull. Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese translate a boxing story of clout and corruption into a slice of modern temper.

Resurrection. Eva LeGallienne, Roberts Blossom, Sam Shepard, and Ellen Burstyn act excellently in a wobbly script about a woman with healing powers.

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David O. Selznick with portrait of Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara. Photo from book.

lege. In 1923 the father's business collapsed, and Selznick began to scrounge around the film world in New York. He had some ambition to be a writer, but his brother Myron, who became a top agent, was already in California and urged him to come out. In 1926 he made the move. He went to work, for a two-week trial period, as a reader in the MGM story department. At the end of the trial he was made manager of the story department; seven months later he was assistant to a top producer. Clearly the fish was in the water.

The career snowballed, through several studios and back to MGM where, since he had meanwhile married Louis B. Mayer's daughter, he felt a particular need to prove himself. He soon shed the "son-in-law" label. His first MGM production was *Dinner at Eight*, a smash; his fifth was *Viva Villa!* which marked the end of his first year there, was an Oscar nominee and a modest success; his seventh was *David Copperfield*, another Oscar nominee and a huge success. The Dickens film was the first of a string that he produced at MGM and later at his own studio derived from books that he had adored as a boy and youth—*Anna Karenina, A Tale of Two Cities, Little Lord Fauntleroy, The Prisoner of Zenda, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. (Almost all of them were successful, and those made from great books reflected the high-level commercial producer who makes changes for commerce with solemn respect.) Ben Hecht, who worked on some screenplays for him, once sent him a telegram: "The trouble with you, David, is that you did all your reading before you were twelve."

Selznick's complete filmography—which includes *A Bill of Divorcement, King Kong, Nothing Sacred*, the first (and best) *A Star is Born*, and three Hitchcocks, *Rebecca, Spellbound*, and *The Paradine Case*—is staggering in terms of success and of filmgoers' pleasure. And all this without even mentioning *Gone With the Wind*. The section on the making of that film is of course the longest, and the details of the history, a quite different subject from one's opinion of the film itself, make one gape at Selznick's vigor and command. (Haver omits one sidelight. The search for a Scarlett O'Hara was so widely publicized and went on so long that Clare Boothe wrote a satirical play about it, *Kiss the Boys Goodbye*, which was produced on Broadway, then filmed.)

The most impressive aspect of the book is that it's the portrait of a man who, through most of his life, was happy. Happy, despite a thousand daily worries and irritations, because he was being used up in the work he wanted to do and for which he was completely qualified. His mind and taste were precisely congruent with the upper end of the Hollywood spectrum so, whatever the daily abrasions, there was no basic abrasion: there was snugness, completion. It showed in the way he operated, the Napoleonic confidence in large matters and the equally Napoleonic control of detail. When *A Tale of Two Cities* was in production, Selznick insisted that one close-up of Ronald Colman be lighted only with candles—40 years before Stanley Kubrick "invented" the effect in *Barry Lyndon*. When Victor Fleming broke down from overwork on *GWTW*, Selznick had another director on tap, Sam Wood, to cover Fleming's two-week rest. (Selznick, working equally hard, did not break down.) And he also could make sure that Gregory Peck was shaving three times a day while *Spellbound* was shooting, because of the star's heavy beard, and could fret, during the production of *Since You Went Away*, about Claudette Colbert's time off for menstrual pain.

Inevitably he made his mistakes. He willingly allowed Charles Laughton to withdraw from Micawber after three or four days' shooting; I'm a W. C. Fields nut, but that Yankee twang in Dickens has always jarred. And Selznick wouldn't go ahead on *Stagecoach*, with John Ford directing, unless Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich played the leads; so someone else made the picture. (In Selznick's defense it might be said that he never cared much for Westerns anyway.)

There were more mistakes. But most of the major ones cluster toward the end of his career after his wife left him in 1945. The inferable reason for the split was Jennifer Jones. The inferable

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reason for the change in his career, of which Haver doesn't make much, is that Irene Selznick had been a sound and needed adviser. True, Selznick was now no longer young in a business that he always said belonged to the young, but he wasn't 70, he was 43. True, Hollywood was about to move out of its old production modes, but the change was only beginning. There seems no reason to doubt that he lost strength when his wife went. And, because his life and the success of his work were so tightly linked, our feeling of fundamental happiness in him begins to dim.

The only memorable picture with which he was subsequently associated was *The Third Man*, and he didn't claim much contribution to it, although he is listed as co-producer with Alexander Korda. The most notorious of this last group was *Duel in the Sun*, which is an almost too pat case of a near-menopausal man trying to demonstrate sexuality to a younger woman. (He made the picture for Jennifer Jones.) He strove so hard to get raunchiness into it that footage had to be deleted at the request of the Hays office and the Legion of Decency, which was far from typical of Selznick's films.

Two more points. If you have thought that the frenzy level of day-to-day filmmaking work must be high, this book will turn up the dial further. How Selznick knew where he was at any moment, how he knew he wanted to revise this page of script or that hairstyle or lighting, are tributes to a secret gyroscope—a gyroscope spun by the power of the happiness that was in him for so long—which separated each hectic day into multiple discrete moments of clarity. (And while he was working on one film, he was also planning others. Haver has to handle them serially, which Selznick did not.)

And there's a central matter, one I've noted before. The persona and function of the producer have been badly skimped in all the writing about Hollywood. The *auteur* theory concentrates on directors and often treats producers as the grains of sand for pearl-making directors. Even where that was true, the strong producers left an imprint on films as vivid as the directors'. Hitchcock, working for Selznick or anyone else, was sui generis; but most of the others, John Cromwell, George Cukor, William Wellman, William Dieterle, worked *under* Selznick. In filmmaking whose only real reason for being is profit, I can't see why the man with the surest sense of profitable filmmaking should not be in charge. This book is not the story of a great individual artist but of a preeminent subscriber to a system. The title is not *Hollywood's David O. Selznick*.

His directors' styles and methods were not interchangeable, but their pictures for Selznick are Selznick pictures. When he deliberately wrote a memo that caused John Huston to resign from *A Farewell to Arms*, Selznick told a reporter, "In Mr. Huston, I asked for a first violinist and instead got a conductor." That says it all.

Haver gets a bit carried away in his peroration. Even one who looks as dourly as I do at most contemporary US film can't agree that Selznick's "commitment to excellence and the standards of quality . . . are sadly lacking today." Every year there are dozens of US films with high production standards: that's not our trouble. And Haver's statement about Selznick's "concern for the integrity and intelligence of the audience" is a rather free translation of Selznick's often-expressed concern to please the audience. Still, in its look, its care, its enthusiasm and fascinating detail, this is the best book about the old Hollywood since Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By* (which came from the same publisher).

Cultural consumerism and political passivity.

The Vienna Analogy

by Leon Botstein

There has been a surge of interest in the world of *fin de siècle* Vienna in our culture. Carl Schorske's widely reviewed *Fin de Siècle Vienna* (1980) (which quickly sold over 15,000 copies—more than the most optimistic projections by its publisher) is only the most recent in a remarkable array of *fin de siècle* Viennesiana which has come out since the mid-1970s. These years have also seen a Mahler and Bruckner revival on records and in concert programs, and a host of new and reissued biographies and letter collections of Wolf, Mahler, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern has appeared. The past two years have seen a flood of books on the "historical" Freud. In the arts, there was the 1979 *Vienna Moderne* exhibit in New York and Houston; and a series of art and coffee table books on the Vienna Secession, on Vienna's *fin de siècle* architectural innovators, and on Klimt and Schiele.

This cultural and historical curiosity recalls the vogue of Weimar culture and politics during the 1960s and early 1970s, when talk of a "Weimar analogy" was in the air. America was in an age of aesthetic experimentation, with a visible avant garde in the academy, in music, poetry, and drama, an avant garde often self-consciously reminiscent of Weimar's experimental culture. The 1960s and early 1970s brought new scholarship on the Weimar period. The public presence of Herbert Marcuse as guru of the new politics drew scholars to neo-Marxism, to the Frankfurt School, to critical theory, to Walter Benjamin, and to the Georg Lukacs of the 1920s and 1930s. All that was new, especially with conscience, with daring, with a sharp critique of monopoly capitalism, bourgeois sanctimoniousness, liberalism, and nationalism in the 1960s evoked the spirit of the Weimar period.

The challenge to routine politics in the 1960s lent cogency to the "Weimar analogy." Turmoil in the streets and on campuses over Vietnam and civil rights, the idealistic challenge by the young, with its burgeoning stylistic "counterculture," and the sense of chaos in our democratic processes all had their Weimar analogues.

To some, Weimar contained explicit political lessons. "Uncivilized" political radicalism and extremism in mores (notably in sexual behavior and in the disparagement of monogamous romantic love) might lead to destruction of the very freedoms that made the political and cultural challenge possible. America might, like Weimar, find itself reeling toward the extreme right in a populist surge toward reactionary authori-

Leon Botstein is president of Bard College.

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tarianism. As in Weimar, respectability and tradition appeared to be pitted against seeming decadence and modernism in the America of the 1960s.

By the late Nixon years, the political struggles and artistic adventures that had given impetus to such warnings from the American center and the right were over. Yet some final and predictably commercial symptoms of the American romance with Weimar continued to appear, such as the Broadway musical and film *Cabaret*. Its portrayal of Weimar was a box office success even in a moment of decline in intergenerational strife.

Weimar is now *passé*. The avant garde in art, music, and theater, even in poster art and political film and theater, is quiet. Brecht has receded into academe, Fritz Lang's films have lost their student cult, the Bauhaus has become just one more notable artistic movement. Weimar, like radicalism itself, is absent from the campus culture.

Our futurist, often optimistic, enthusiasms of the 1960s have lapsed into apathy. Even the tame heir of 1960s political activism, the post-Watergate vigilance against political corruption, has dissipated into political withdrawal and *ennui* in 1980. The styles of modern culture in art, dress, and architecture of the 1960s have become transmuted into varieties of nostalgia.

In 1980, the particular past that fascinates the present has shifted from the Berlin of the 1920s to *fin de siècle* Vienna. Experimentation and the modern in a context of radical politics drew us back to Weimar. The absence of politics, a gradual social fragmentation in our nation, the decline of America as a world power, the retreat into self, a selective reclaiming of tradition, nostalgia, aestheticism, and a deeply passive pessimism now draw us nearer to *fin de siècle* Vienna.

In international politics, the broadest context for a historical analogy, there are pathetic, somewhat cheap, comparisons to be made. In 1900 Austria-Hungary appeared to be a world power, but was viewed by its fellow world powers as essentially second rate, on the verge of internal dissolution, burdened with a weak, cumbersome military and internal bureaucracy and a faltering, underdeveloped economy. The Hapsburg defeat at Sadowa in 1866 and the loss of Austrian-controlled provinces in Italy cruelly exposed this Hapsburg weakness. Since Vietnam, America has lost credibility, despite appearances and official claims, as an effective world power with maneuverability. It appears to be a lumbering giant incapable of swift, decisive action. Its status in the international economy is steadily weakening as a result of its dependence on OPEC, the vulnerability of the dollar, and the aging of its industrial plant. The contrast of apparent power with actual ineffectiveness (e.g. the Iran rescue escapade and the hostage stalemate) also marked the huge Hapsburg empire in the decades before its collapse. The failure of serious effective national leadership then and now can be compared. The utility of the old Emperor Franz Josef as a symbol of unity reminds one of the fading but continuing myth of the power of the presidency to hold us together and lead us forward in the face of disintegration and decline.

Internally, turn of the century Vienna mirrored the fragmentation of an empire. Its politics were dominated by competing nationalities tearing away at the appearance of a unified monarchy. Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Germans all made even the impotent parliament of the monarchy a stage for inaction, argument, even brawls. Beyond the antagonisms of nationalities, conflict among social classes and political groups in turn of the century Vienna was severe. Socialists, Christian-Socialists, pan-Germans, conservative monarchists, and liberals all made a mockery of the idea of national unity.

Is our situation so different? Ethnicity has successfully outdistanced the myth of common citizenship. Are we not a collection of ethnic, social, regional, and economic factions, all acting on narrow grounds of self-interest with a weak sense of the common public good? Our recent deterioration further separates groups in the nation by economic status and race. The resulting character of our domestic politics is analogous to the Austrian and Viennese predecessor: national paralysis in the face of serious economic, social, and international challenges.

Turn of the century Vienna, like America in the past decade, was rocked by internal political scandal involving treason and bribery. From Watergate to Abscam, the persistence of mediocrity and venality among politicians has engendered a cynicism about politics worthy of the alienated intellectuals and artists of *fin de siècle* Vienna.

The cultural responses to these comparable political and social conditions of

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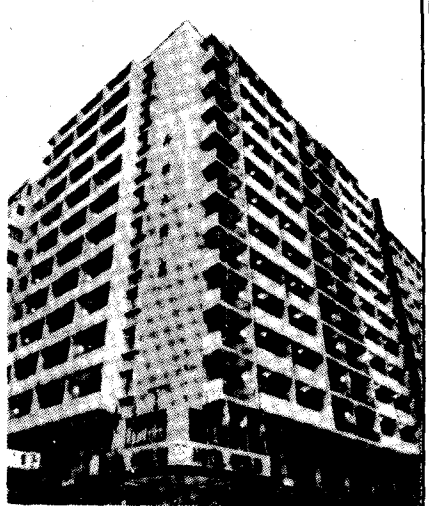

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fragmentation, leaderlessness, ineptness, corruption, and general dissolution are remarkably similar. Consider the world of music. Mahler and Schoenberg, two of the most vaunted innovators from the turn of the century, were in their own estimate not as self-consciously modern as we might like to think. Their musical response reflected an effort to reclaim the forms and techniques of earlier musical traditions. Mahler rejected, for himself, the more forward-looking "total work of art" of Wagner, the opera and the new political, programmatic aspects of music. Bruckner took refuge in traditional Catholicism. Schoenberg, who started under the sway of Brahms, saw the 12 tone system as a refuge from the cheap sentimentality and decadence of contemporary music. Theirs was a traditional and backward-looking modernism and a wholly apolitical one. Compare what has happened in modern music in America. George Crumb and Philip Glass, two of our major composers, seek an almost sentimental if not wistful modernism by generating new pleasing effects and sonorities. Other composers like George Rochberg and Frederic Rzewski have rejected the avant garde and seek artistic solace in quotations from the past, and in older idioms and styles. Nostalgia reigns supreme in our musical audience. Like the Viennese audience of 1900, the concert-going public of today has scant tolerance for the new and relishes the older repertoire—Baroque, classical, and Romantic works and sounds.

In the plastic arts, the interest in Viennese painting and crafts reveals a comparable retreat from the new and the future. Much of what is now popular about Klimt and the Vienna Secession is their blend of ornament and symbolism, their subtle prettiness. An eclectic effort to decorate every detail of life from lettering to tableware to buildings pervaded Viennese art. The art of that period, notably the portraiture, is personal and inward looking, rarely revolutionary in artistic technique or style. Only superficially "modern," it is easy and safe to look at. The craft movement, the growth in interest here in weaving and ceramics, had political significance 10 years ago in its implicit rejection of industry, the city, and capitalism. Now it has become a consumer success, a platform for Joan Mondale, a fetish of decoration. The art nouveau and art deco taste of today reflects our desire to cover with color and intricate designs the ugliness of the reality around us.

The apolitical, ahistorical trends and general alienation of intellectuals from politics and society in Vienna of 1900 bred a non-politics and a weak socialism, a passion for "art for arts' sake" and a fascination with the private and the psychological. One can see a contemporary American analogy in our obsession with new therapies, with personal growth and development, with one's own personal odyssey in life.

The educated middle class of Vienna was absorbed in *Gemütlichkeit*, in a drive, as Stefan Zweig put it, for security and respectability. It was driven by a passion to consume culture and appear civilized without making political commitments. Theater, opera, concerts, poetry, books, popular presentations of knowledge, the historical novel, the popular biography flourished. They flourish here too: merely on the basis of the new expanded sections in our major newspapers on the home, culture, and "living," it is apparent that we too are a nation not of producers of new culture but of consumers of old culture.

This smug cultural sophistication in the midst of political hopelessness and national mistrust and boredom constitutes the real Vienna analogy. We absorb ourselves in a culture of the past and immerse ourselves in our private lives, but are without hope when it comes to politics and social questions. We live, as did the *fin de siècle* Viennese, in what Hermann Broch called a "value-vacuum."

The tragedy of the Vienna analogy, of our fascination with that period, is not visible in the simple awe we feel for the giants of that culture. Rather it lies in the possibility that the generation ahead of us, much like those that followed *fin de siècle* Vienna, will grow up not merely as aesthetes, comfortable middle-class culture mongers and political illiterates, but as potential victims of the extreme political domination that may follow. The lesson of the current romance with Vienna and the Vienna analogy should be to rededicate ourselves to the tasks of politics and society in order to give meaning to our common life.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, himself a product of *fin de siècle* Vienna, observed:

> One can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, happy, startled. But hopeful? And why not?
>
> A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe his master will come the day after tomorrow?—and *what* can he not do here?—How can I do it?—How am I supposed to answer this?
>
> Can only those hope who can talk? Only those who have mastered the use of a language. That is to say, the phenomena of hope are modes of this complicated form of life.

Unlike our Viennese antecedents, let us heed Wittgenstein's insight, and shed the political and social hopelessness of *fin de siècle* Vienna.

A Czech Artist of Memory

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting by Milan Kundera

(Knopf; $9.95)

How does one stay in touch with the real in a brutally absurd world? This is the question that lies between the lines of this saturnine, grief-ridden, magical book, written by a Czech dissident in exile, a satirist with a tear in his eye whose telescopic property enables him to see all the way to Prague.

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting begins with a joke about repression and its double meaning. Back in 1948, party leader Gottwald made a speech to the people of Prague. It was a snowy day, he was speaking from a balcony, and one of his comrades, Clementis, gave him his fur cap. The speech proved to be historic, and a photograph featuring the two men became famous. Four years later Clementis, now foreign secretary, was hanged as a traitor and his figure was airbrushed from the photograph. Where he had stood was now a blank wall. All that remained of him was the cap on Gottwald's head.

Deep East European humor: a message flashing from Gogol to contem-

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porary Prague—the void under the fact, the commonplace detail with a surrealist twist and a manifold meaning; a hatful of terror, oblivion, and an unruly, irrational element and its laughter that resist them. The joke is also typical Kundera—a Czech with iron in his irony who has never had to go out of his way to find his material.

A cocky, derisive, antinomian spirit from the start, Kundera was kicked out of the party in 1950, probably by a tribunal of his peers—the fate of Ludvik Jahn, the anti-hero of his first novel. Kundera describes watching his erstwhile comrades dancing in the streets of Prague, "its cafés full of poets, its jails full of traitors," on the day that Zavis Kalandra, a famous Surrealist, was executed, the smoke from the crematorium rising to "the heavens like a good omen." Excluded from "the magic circle" of the orthodox, Kundera realized that he belonged now to Kalandra, among the outsiders and the fallen. These early years of the "idyll for all," as he puts it—"timid lovers held hands on movie screens, marital infidelity received harsh penalties at citizens' courts of honor, nightingales sang, and the body of Clementis swung back and forth like a bell ringing in the new dawn of mankind"—appear to have confirmed him in his sensibility of extremes as well as in his skepticism and iconoclasm. Amid the relentless positivism and dogmatism, he held to his view of the vanity of human desires, the crossing of purposes within and between people, the child that continues to father the man. Like the cap on Gottwald's head, Kundera placed what faith he had left in the irrational, the accidental, even the perverse, which provides now and then a little space in the interstices of an authoritarian society for life and truth to break through. He wrote a lot about gratuitous acts—particularly of people jumping out of windows, morally speaking, to spite and shame their persecutors—exploring through the private life the defenestration tendencies of his so frequently conquered country, placing the compelling fantasies of his sexual marksmen alongside those of the state and its henchmen. Having ruined his life by his political "joke," Ludvik Jahn then completes his humiliation by trying to seduce the wife of his chief betrayer. In *Life is Elsewhere*, a Nabokovian account of the short life of a precocious literary and political opportunist that parodies the tradition of romantic poetry and politics, Jaromil Volker simultaneously achieves the zenith and nadir of his life when he informs on his girl friend and her brother. The main interest of Kundera's last novel, *The Farewell Party*, surrounds the impulse that prompts a dissident intellectual to allow a young nurse to poison herself accidentally.

Since neither the political nor the sexual areas of Czech life were open to this kind of inspection, Kundera went unpublished, except for the period of the Prague Spring when *The Joke* appeared. It made him immediately famous and two years later, his country having returned to "the warm loving embrace of the Soviet Union," it made him again a non-person. The only work he could get was writing horoscopes for a socialist youth magazine under the pseudonym of a non-existent mathematician (satire never has had to go out of its way to find Kundera); when his identity was uncovered and a young editor fell with him, he decided he was bad news for everyone and managed to leave.

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting is his first writing from exile. It is made up of seven narratives suspended like bridges from the two themes of its title, as though Kundera were trying to write his way across the gap between East and West, past and present, rejoining what the conditions of the cold war and of his own life have sundered. Thus the cap from Clementis's head finds a lovely parallel in a section of the final story, which describes the funeral of Victor Passer, a fellow refugee who goes on believing in his life even in its agonizing terminal stage, much as he had stubbornly clung to his vision of a new and humane politics. The funeral soon turns comic when the grave attendants miss their cue and lower the coffin into the grave, even as the speaker goes on addressing his remarks directly to the deceased. Then a gust of wind blows the hat from the head of Clevis, one of the mourners. A self-conscious, indecisive man, Clevis finally brings himself to chase down the hat, which has become the center of everyone's attention, but it continues to elude his furtive gestures and finally blows into the grave. The mourners are all racked by barely repressed laughter, particularly so when each of them must drop his shovelful of earth onto the coffin, on which sits the hat, "as though the indomitably vital and optimistic Passer were sticking his head out."

Another Czech who insists on being remembered and who illustrates the cruel, homely, perverse, and zany way things happen—the human comedy Czech style—is a dissenter named Mirek. Mirek still smarts from the realization that many years ago he took as his first mistress an ardent Stalinist who, worse yet, was ugly. It is 1971, the authorities are closing in, he has carefully kept many incriminating documents of his and his friends' activities, believing that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against oblivion." Instead of hiding his papers, however, he races off in his car to see his Zdena and ask her to return his love letters. Mirek has some revisionism of his own in mind, and though his trip is full of Proustian slips—the memory of his willingness to bark like a dog so that she wouldn't say he made love like an intellectual, even the memory of a begonia-decked summer house that delivers the astonishing message that he once loved her, big nose and all—none of this prevents Mirek from airbrushing her out of his life, for "Mirek is as much a rewriter of history as the Communist Party, all political parties, all nations, all men. . . . The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past."

Meanwhile, Mirek's other purpose—to pursue his fate as a soldier of memory—is going forward on its own: that is, when he arrives home the police are already going through his papers. "You don't seem to care much about your friends," one of them says. But though his son and 10 of his comrades will go to prison with him, Mirek is fulfilled.

> They wanted to erase hundreds of thousands of lives from human memory and leave nothing but a single unblemished idyll. But Mirek is going to stretch out full length over their idyll, like a blemish, like the cap on Gottwald's head.

Mirek's story is clear in its meaning but enigmatic in its tone, somewhere between bemusement and derision.

"IN AN ADMITTEDLY unscientific sampling of popular opinion, *Paris-Match* correspondents discovered that only 3 per cent of Poles would vote for Communism in a free election. Either Communism has to go, or 3 per cent is a Polish mandate."

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BLACK DOG

I see my children learn
to lean away from me,
avoiding my anger with a grin
the wrong size.

And why not, I say,
who raised them up alone,
hoping that the wind
would temper to the shorn lambs?

Not in ways that would have them
grow too gentle though—
so that in their adulthood
there would be nothing common
to us all.

I see too many
soft in the wrong place
who flinch and yield
at every prod
who bury their face
in their hands
too often—

so that the gesture
loses its terrible purity.

Margo Lockwood

Though he is deeply concerned about the "struggle of memory," Kundera is generally sardonic about the dissidents who carry it on. Politics seems to have set his teeth permanently on edge. Elsewhere he distinguishes between the "demons" and the "angels"—and their respective modes of laughter, the former being generated by the irrational, incongruous, disorderly principle, the latter by the rational, harmonious, dogmatic one. He tells us that both principles are needed but since the angels are in control everywhere he looks ("they [have] taken over the left and the right, Arab and Jew, Russian general and Russian dissident") he sides with the demons of heresy rather than the angels of dogma. Which is hardly a contest for him: a subversive conservative, he identifies the demonic with the burdens of history, adulthood, memory, remorse, and love; the angelic with the innocence, indifference, present-mindedness, sensuality, and conformity of childhood.

This distinction runs through and animates most of the other stories. Its principal embodiment is a beautiful Czech refugee named Tamina who seems to be a surrogate for his soul and its situation. Tamina supports herself as a waitress but sustains herself with the memories of her happy marriage, her husband having died soon after they escaped to the West. Immured in the inward silences of her devotion to their shared past (Kundera calls it a small green plot on which a single rose grows), Tamina listens patiently to the childish chatter of her customers—mostly graphomaniacs, orgasm freaks, and other victims of Western anomie—waiting for the hours when she can resume the litany and reconstruction of the vacations, holidays, and other time-marks of her marriage, as well as the daily re-creation of her husband's face. This is her joy; her despair is the blank spaces in her chronology, the dimming of her husband's features and expressions in her imagination. Meanwhile her diary and letters remain in Prague. Eventually she gives herself to a fatuous young intellectual who has promised to pick up her papers in Prague. Able to seduce her but unable to enlist her in his "universe of blood and thoughts," Hugo succumbs to *litost* (the Czech term for Kundera's master emotion—an angry mixture of humiliation and vindictiveness), and tells her he cannot go to Prague because his one published article, on the workings of power, has made him a marked man there.

In Tamina's encounters with her customers as well as her glimpses of the surrounding inane culture, Kundera is not only placing an adult in a world of children but also placing what one might call the way of gravity next to the way of vacuity. This is not a matter of East vs. West, for as the companion story makes clear, what gives weight to one's existence is mainly a fealty to the past which is everywhere under attack.

Tamina in her vigils is not looking for nostalgia but for reality; "she is not compelled by a desire for beauty, she is compelled by a desire for life." But with her access to the past stymied, she enters a realm of fantasy or dream or parable in which a young man named Gabriel advises her to "forget her forgetting," and escorts her to an island of children, a place where "things have no weight, where there is no remorse." There Tamina abandons her memories, then her modesty, then her adult sexuality along with its "hellish" context of love—the tensions, fear, and anguish that went into the drama and responsibility of her passionate marriage. Playing around in the bathroom and then in bed with the nude children, her own early eroticism is released and, like another of Kundera's characters who is wildly turned on by a girl who resembles his mother's sexy friend from his youth, Tamina finds it delicious. "Sexuality freed from its diabolical ties with love had become a joy of angelic simplicity."

Into this grave lyric of Tamina's progress toward death, Kundera pours a massive accompaniment of commentary. It begins with reflections on Kafka's treatment of Prague as a city without memory, of a humanity that has lost all connection with humanity. As such his novel *The Trial* has become a looming prophecy of the present regime, which has dismissed many of its historians from the universities and sent most of its practicing humanists into prison or exile—an organized campaign of forgetting aimed at the extinction of the national identity. In time Husak, "the Premier of Forgetting," appears in the story: Kundera and his father hear him making a speech nearby to an audience of Pioneers: "Children! You are the future. Children! Never look back."

As Husak speaks for a childlike future, the life of Kundera's father is drawing near its end. A famous pianist, a scholar, a man of the past, he has spent his final years writing about the Beethoven sonatas, particularly the variations of the profoundly introspective #111. "Now I understand," he tells Kundera, shortly before he closes his eyes and begins his strenuous journey toward death, imparting to his son a hint of why Beethoven used this mode of composition to explore his inner universe, a hint that has, of course, inspired this book. Kundera compares the way of his father's life to the dying tradition of music itself and the nature of Husak's state to the standard harmonies, banal melodies, the demagogic rhythms of pop.

Back on the island, Tamina's erotic adventures soon come to a predictable end in boredom, rivalry, and then animosity. In time she adjusts to the politics of a fun-and-games world, but amid the transistorized music, the writhing

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of the children's bodies, she realizes that the previously pleasant buoyancy of her new life has become terrifying, an "unbearable absence of weight"; she tries to swim away from the island, struggles all night in the water, and goes under where she began, much like the long ride on horseback to hide his body that Kundera imagines his father making.

"The Angels" is not the most effective story in this book of often amazing variations. There is too much content in it to control, possibly too much personal grief. But it is the most deeply meant and the key to the book as a whole. It is an intricate parabolic meditation, I think, on Kundera's situation as a renegade East European writer who must now make his way through the much "lighter" atmosphere of the West, where everything is permitted but very little matters, precisely the opposite of the atmosphere that has formed him. It also carries a tutelary message to a longtime sensualist who has reached the other side of middle age, where desire is harder to come by than gratification and the lure of the "angels" is as hard to resist as it is to be nourished by. Several of the stories I have not touched on carry out Kundera's exploration of the inner world he brought with him to the West in lieu of his archives. I have not done justice to their range and cohesiveness, to Kundera's ability to keep the most disparate material working together in a story mostly by means of the power of his images to startle and radiate and connect, "the esemplastic power," as Coleridge put it. Nor have I been able to indicate how he sometimes allows his fiction to be victimized by rhetoric, an impatience at having to test his convictions by dramatizing them instead of just stating them. More's the pity, since these convictions about the way of gravity and the way of vacuity are diamond-hard, formed under the pressures of a life and its changes that beggar a Western reviewer's experience but still can instruct his moral imagination. If you will read this book patiently and honestly it may begin to change your life.

Ted Solotaroff

Ted Solotaroff is a senior editor at Harper & Row and the author of *The Red Hot Vacuum* (Godine).

Death Was Her One Big Chance

Alice James: A Biography
by Jean Strouse

(Houghton Mifflin; $15)

The Death and Letters of Alice James
edited by Ruth Bernard Yeazell

(University of California Press; $10.95)

Alice James (1848-1892) was the youngest child and the only girl in the remarkable James family. Henry James Sr., a fiercely unassimilable religious philosopher, was, like all five of his children, fiercely overcharged. He was strangely gifted but more indecipherable than his novelist son and philosopher son (Bernard Shaw thought him more talented than either). "Neurasthenic" and wildly God-intoxicated in a fashion unclear even to his own generation, he found relief by being the most assiduously loving husband and father. His creed was an exalted private mix of theology and utopian socialism that viewed the necessary, urgent perfection of society as "the redeemed form of man." The kernel of his belief, oddly shared by his famous sons though they were bored by his unprofessional style, was that the separate soul is sinful, sick, until it joins in a passionate relationship with others, society, God, absolute good.

The two youngest sons, Garth Wilkinson ("Wilky") and Robertson ("Bob") were abolitionists, badly damaged by their Civil War service (the father pushed them into war, kept back William and Henry); they became lifelong casualties. They were a trial to the others. They had no great message to redeem them; to be untalented in the James family was to feel unequal to the higher relationships, to be damned by egoism.

The first use of William James's famous pragmatism was to himself. Successively teaching at Harvard as a physiologist, psychologist, philosopher, and moral philosopher to all America saved him from the neurotic uncertainty and psychotic visions he suffered even as a medical student. He was beautifully in touch with so much more than his own "sick soul" that he ended up as Emerson's last disciple. Henry, outwardly the most unruffled and steadily productive of all the Jameses, rose above the hereditary anxieties plaguing all five children by establishing an independent existence in Europe and enjoying his imagination. Despite his "conquest of London," early fame, and a brilliant social existence, he confessed near the end of his life that the "starting point" of his accomplishments was "loneliness." The Jameses markedly disapproved of the separateness that came with their genius.

Alice, far more intelligent than Wilky and Bob, a marvelous observer like William and Henry, possessed of a thoroughly admirable, sane mind with a tortured psyche, was from her 19th year spectacular for her ailments and breakdowns even in a period clamorous with the wails of gifted upper-class women. What went on in the lower classes was not reported. Alice was a natural writer confined to letters and a diary that she began only in her very last years. She was doted upon, waited upon, everlastingly encouraged and cherished by her all too expressive and sympathetic parents and brothers. Not even Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Marian Adams, Olivia Clemens, Elinor Mead Howells, or Mary Lincoln (to mention just a few of the period's fabulous invalids) had their sicknesses described so repeatedly and at such length.

Alice was witty about her sufferings, her doctors, her anxious caretaking family. Henry "gives me calm and solace by assuring me that my nerves are his nerves, and my stomach his stomach." "My large repertory," she called her long, inextricable, still mysterious list of ailments. Nervous prostration, "toplings over," neurasthenia, hysteria, "rheumatic gout," "spinal neurosis,"

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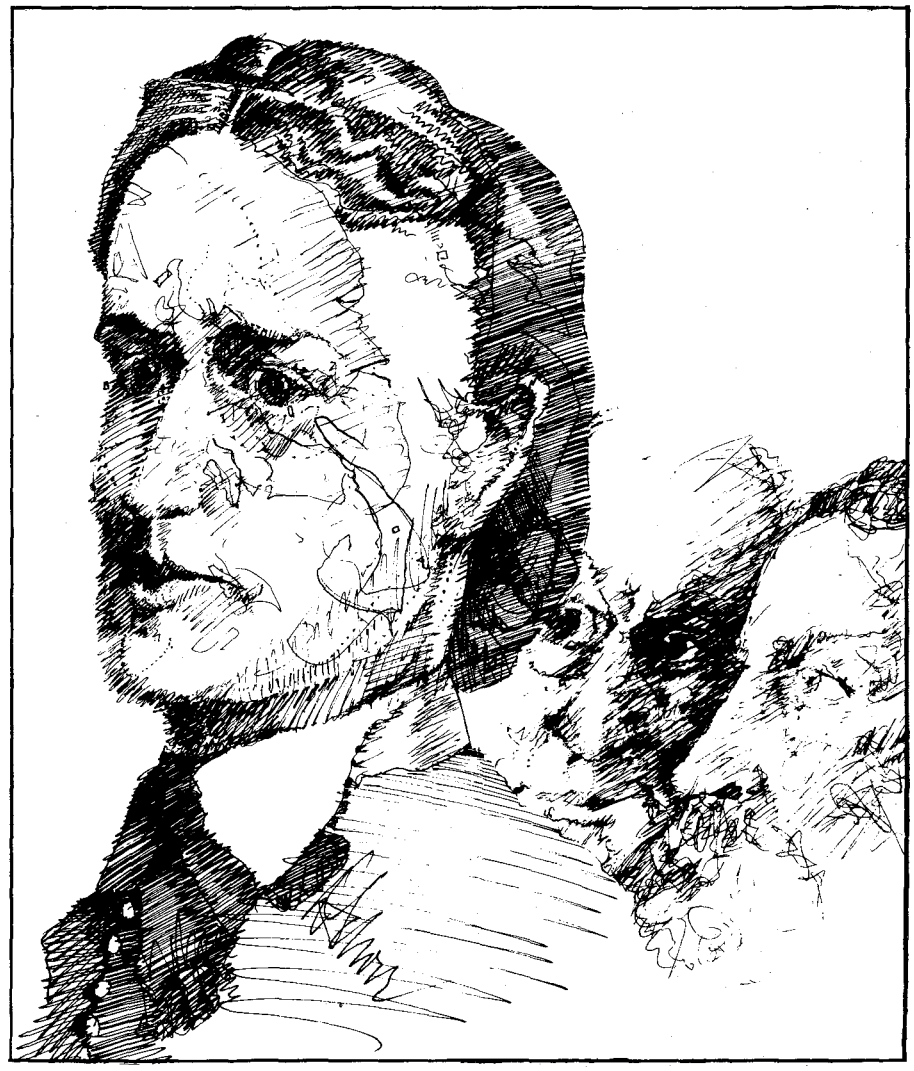
"cardiac complications," "nervous hyperesthesia." There was a long succession of doctors at home and abroad; there were sanitoria, treatments "faradic" and "galvanic" with electrical machines; there was the "Adams Nervine Asylum" in Jamaica Plain for "nervous people who are not insane."

Alice was definitely not "insane." She became a rather more interesting bluestocking than her friends, all from distinguished Boston families, who until they married confined themselves to good works. With the scattered and haphazard education of her brothers (Henry never went to college either), her real intellectual cultivation was through her father—and in revolt against his ungraspable metaphysics, his insipid moralisms. The father's almost pathologically intense visions of the "spiritual world" were reflected in all of them, and the writers in the family (including Alice) became so by chafing against his bountiful but inexpressible idealism. The family, as William said of Henry, was their only country.

Alice had more than her share of the James longing for a world elsewhere. Mentally she was forced to live at home, to subsist on idealism without being able to make a literary career that would advance her considerable independence. (When she retired to England after her parents' deaths she showed herself a fierce Irish nationalist and radical democrat.) In Cambridge she seemed just another excessively high-toned, repressed, upper-class spinster waiting for marriage and meanwhile basking in the self-approval of a literary class whose wine had turned into the water of parochial do-goodism. Marriage never came. She soon lacked the energy to do good.

What else was the matter with Alice James? What, besides her inheritance of "over-excitation" and intense intellect for which there might have been relief in sustained literary work? In his famous and now standard five-volume biography of Henry, Leon Edel established rivalry with William and even fear of his domineering elder brother as a clue to the novelist's expatriation and the psychological patterning of his novels. There is no question that Alice felt herself unworthy by contrast with her immensely gifted brothers. The parents were over-solicitous; William babied her, flirted with her, condescended; Henry was perfectly, tirelessly at her service when she ended up near him in England.



Alice, Henry, and William James by David Schorr

The case of Alice James lends itself to any and every psychological explanation. It fills still another copious chapter in our rediscovery of those many gifted and wasted women who in the 19th century (not to go back earlier) were made to feel inferior. So there are no intellectual surprises in Jean Strouse's excellent, thoroughly researched life of Alice. It is sober, conscientious, and by our current standards makes every right inference about Alice's unmarried state, her angry submission to her father and brothers, her lively hidden jokes. She shows Alice as a constantly menaced personality rather than as a martyr.

Still, Jean Strouse cannot help turning the devouringly protective father into something of a bumbling monster who saw women as exalted beings rather than as human equals. But in defense of the old man I have to say that although he wrote of society as the redemption of man, he was, for all his witty attacks on Emerson and Carlyle, not interested in persons so much as he was in God as the only possible completion of ourselves. Because he had a romantic's idea of God as wholly a mental construction, not an outside supernatural force, he believed that there was a "spiritual world" within us more urgent than the physical world. God is discovered through our mental makeup alone, so He becomes that part of us we are always looking for, are too close to see. It is a hopelessly intimate search, rather like our present belief in some psychological identity, planted long ago in infancy, that will explain us to ourselves. The difference is that to the Jameses death was the door to the universe at large, to infiniteness of being. They believed in some form of immortality without being able to say how they did.

Both Jean Strouse and Ruth Bernard Yeazell, in her equally impressive introduction to the letters, portray an Alice deeply concerned with death. The whole story is extraordinary. After a lifetime of being diagnosed and "treated" without remedy, she learned with relief that she had breast cancer and would soon be dead. It was good to know something definite at last about her "little rubbish

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heap" of a body—and what could she expect? But how did she put this to William?

> It is the most supremely interesting moment in life, the only one in fact when living seems life. . . . It is as simple in one's own person as any fact of nature, the fall of a leaf or the blossoming of a rose, and I have a delicious consciousness, ever present, of wide spaces close at hand, and whisperings of release in the air.

William, learning of her terminal illness, had written her that

> . . . life and death seem singularly close together in all of us—and life a mere farce of frustration in all, so far as the realization of the innermost ideals go to which we are made respectively capable of feeling an affinity and responding. . . . Father would find in me today a much more receptive listener. . . . When that which is *you* passes out of the body, I am sure there will be an explosion of liberated force and life till then eclipsed and kept down. I can hardly imagine *your* transition without a great oscillation of both 'worlds,' as they regain their new equilibrium after the change! Everyone will feel the shock, but you yourself will be more surprised than anybody else.

Death was the one big chance she finally had. It meant something to her we cannot easily understand. It was a clue to more than her own life. She expected something more than she had ever had. But her own mind, by which I mean her deepest faith, was strange to her. This still separates us from her. It separated her from herself.

Alfred Kazin

Alfred Kazin is writing a book on American writers from Emerson to Eliot. His *The Inmost Leaf* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Starting Out In the Thirties* (Vintage) are now available in paperback.

How Revolutions Begin

Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith by James Billington

(Basic Books; $25)

"Woe to the cities that have tinder in their midst," warned Friedrich Schiller in 1799. Tinder, sparks, volcanic eruptions, fire metaphors of all kinds sprang to people's minds in face of the pervasive threats and challenges announced by the French and Industrial revolutions. The sources of fire were all around, in change and in the resistance to it, in poverty and oppression as well as hope. Fire was harnessed in new machines and engines of war, but always threatened to escape control by the apprentice sorcerers who thought to call it to their use. A striking scene in Dostoevsky's great novel of fanaticism, *The Possessed*, depicts the real and symbolic fire that disturbed a sleepy town after an evening of excited talk. Amid the confused attempts to find its source and put it out one local official was heard to exclaim: "The fire is in the minds of men, not in the roofs of buildings!" Dostoevsky's vision of the fire's source is shared by James Billington in his powerful and original account of revolutionary faiths and passions in the period between the French and Russian revolutions.

Billington (who is director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC) has written a remarkable book, learned and lively, wide-ranging and probing, placing many aspects of revolutionary conviction and action in unaccustomed lights. He moves with assurance over the whole of modern history, at home in every decade and in a wide variety of countries. We learn that pursuits usually thought to be far removed from revolution, music and opera, had after all significant roles to play in it. Nor is the cast of characters quite what one would expect. To be sure Marx and Proudhon, Bakunin and Lenin are here, but their accustomed features alter in the light reflected from a whole troupe of more obscure players whose contributions to the drama demand that we understand its more familiar incidents in a different way: Nicholas Bonneville, Adam Weishaupt, Goodwyn Barmby. Billington finds 19th-century sources and counterparts for revolutionary perspectives whose more recent votaries would be surprised to encounter their own features in these ancestors: James Fazy, the Swiss who saw revolutionary struggles as conflicts between generations; and Thomas Urbain, a black who took the name Ismail when he became a Moslem in Egypt during the 1830s. His original revolutionary impulses had found expression in the Saint-Simonian movement, where his Jewish colleague Gustave d'Eichtal felt a special tie to him: "the black and the Jew: the two outcasts, the two prophets!"

These individuals are at the core of Billington's book, for his is a history—as he insists—not of revolutions so much as of revolutionaries. The individuals who carred the fire within them show what the incandescent revolutionary faith fed on, what it illuminated and what it threatened to destroy. All were actors as well as thinkers, but even the stages on which they performed (or at least learned their parts) are different from those we have grown used to: the gardens of the Palais Royal, surrounded by cafés that provided erotic as well as alcoholic inebriation; occult societies and masonic lodges; islands; quasi-religious sects; as well as the more familiar editorial offices of newspapers.

Like his subjects, Billington's intellectual style is fire-like, consuming and illuminating at the same time, transforming the material it feeds on by revealing elements and powers of combination that do not appear on the surface at ordinary temperatures. One instance of this is his passion for the history of the revolutionary vocabulary. We learn that the word communism was invented by the "gutter Rousseau" (*Rousseau du ruisseau*), Restif de la Bretonne. Billington has uncovered the first appearances of "to politic," of "circle" in a political sense, of "intelligentsia," "socialist," "communist," "Communist Party," and all are given a significance that makes them light up the story like little flames. Intellectual and emotional signposts, these "verbal talismans" focused attention and enthusiasm on a single, unmistakable point, feeding the central psychological need Billington finds at work in the revolutionary faithful: radical simplification.

Billington means for us to take the

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image of his title straight and whole: the fire of revolution burns in men's minds. Conditions in society may feed it, but its essential fuel is the irrational desires and untrammeled visions of revolutionaries themselves. Theirs was a new religion, a secularized apocalyptic Christianity with its own rituals and dogmas; many of its recurrent visions and principles of organization had their source in mystical sects and occult traditions. The cafés of the Palais Royal were the breeding ground of the French Revolution because they provided "the intoxicating ambiance of an earthly utopia" that "made the ideal of total secular happiness seem credible as well as desirable." Early revolutionary organizations embodied a mania for mystical numbers and Pythagorean formulas that revealed how their vision of a transformed world was rooted in occult societies like the Bavarian Illuminati of the 1770s. Later membership structures retained the principle of concentric circles—only the fully initiated at the middle—pioneered by masonic lodges; even the Leninist claim that intellectuals represented the proletariat appears as "a mysterious transformation of personal identity" on the model of the Illuminists. The editorial rooms of newspapers were revolutionary seed plots not because they were open to the world outside but because they nourished an enclosed, hermetic world of private imagination.

Billington shifts these mystical and occult currents from the periphery where most historians have placed them (when they have been aware of them at all) to the center of the revolutionary tradition. His novel perspective adds a dimension to what is usually thought about Gracchus Babeuf and Filippo Buonarroti, key figures in transmitting the utopian revolutionary hopes spawned in the 1790s forward into the 19th century. Even here, however, the connections often remain conjectural, with constructions like "possibly," "could be," "may even have been" revealing the weakness of many proposed links. Masonic lodges and secret societies did occupy an important place in late-18th-century life. But fascination with mystical transformations and occult traditions was not more characteristic of revolutionaries than of conservatives; the same symbols and practices Billington finds in early conspiratorial milieu also served the purposes of their opponents. Both in the Old Regime and in the Restoration the need for secrecy was real and in no way irrational, even for quite moderate opponents of frightened regimes. No doubt there was an irrational element in the high-flown visions of national revolution offered by prophets like Mazzini. But to suggest that something characteristic and essential about these visions is revealed by their links with "the unreal world of opera where social, spiritual, and even sexual satisfactions were simultaneously obtained through the magic of music," is to forget how many perfectly respectable and *bien pensant* ideas about the world were offered up in the same magical, oceanic brew. It is no way out to describe these commonalities as a "dialectic of Left-Right interaction." That revolutionaries demonstrated a greater need for occult symbols and irrational satisfaction than conservatives or moderates remains unproved.

IF ONE believes that the fire of revolution burns in the minds of men and not in the conditions of the world they inhabit, then there is a special logic in writing a book about revolutionaries as distinguished from revolutions. For one less sure of this than Billington, however, the focus of his book begs the question it is intended to answer: we get no chance to see whether the fires within might have been ignited from outside. Billington cannot avoid describing some real revolutionary events; indeed his account of the incident of July 12, 1789, that led to the fall of the Bastille two days later is central to his story.

Revolution began in the gardens of the Palais Royal with Camille Desmoulins exhorting bystanders from atop a café table. Half an hour later the crowd went "coursing out onto the streets" and into history. The facts are not wrong, but they are not all there. The hedonistic gratifications of the Palais Royal cafés framed the actions of Desmoulins and his hearers. But outside in the city there was a larger frame: grain shortage, hunger, and the fear of royal military repression. By evening the crowd had in fact been fired on—with casualties—by royal troops. Billington notes the fusillade (he fails to speak about the Parisian *peuple*'s hunger and fear), but he does not allow it to alter his view that the fire of revolution begins within the minds of revolutionaries. Yet it is just such incidents as this that have led recent historians to argue (persuasively, in my view) that political violence most often grows out of collective actions that are not intrinsically violent (Desmoulins and his hearers were demonstrating against the dismissal of a royal minister, Necker). Very often it is the response of authorities that gives the situation a violent turn. Each of the great French revolutionary moments of the 19th century, in 1830, 1848, and 1871, occurred when the authorities moved with force to head off a predominately peaceful movement whose evolution they feared they could not contain. The brutal action of Parisian police who turned a determined but perfectly peaceable demonstration by French physicians into a bloody confrontation last spring shows that the phenomenon is still very much with us.

If the urban crowd needed to be ignited by some external spark, a faithful band carried the inner torch, always on the lookout for a chance to make the world blaze up in its image. The romantic revolutionary conspirator, wrapped up in his cloak and his often fantastic vision of the strength and loyalty of his followers, was a familiar figure in the 19th century. Secret and occult signs, opera and drama, were his milieu. But if this was an important current in the revolutionary tradition, it was one whose weakness revolutionaries themselves often understood, a mode of action they sought to escape or accepted against their will. Already, after the establishment of the July Monarchy in 1830, influential French republicans who had earlier conspired in secret hoped to establish public organizations. The government's ban on political activity in 1834 assured that opposition politics would continue to be secret and conspiratorial. Among those who understood that conspiratorial forms of politics were a continuing invitation to self-delusion was Karl Marx.

Billington's treatment of Marx is among the least satisfactory features of his book. His commitment to writing history at first hand seems to grow weaker here, as if it were enough to place a traditional image of Marx against the background of occultism, and orient it around the search for "verbal talismans." What this leaves out is what one would expect to be the center of Billington's treatment of Marx: his vision of revolution itself and his experience of it. Marx was a passionate foe of illusions, and one of the powers he attributed to revolution was the ability to dispel them, those of revolutionaries included. If communism were to be placed on a solid base it had to be free

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both from the philosophical abstractions of his fellow Germans and from the deluded self-importance of French conspirators. The first aim of the *Communist Manifesto* was to bring the "spectre of communism" out of the shadows and into the open. Communism was linked to overall historical development; it was precisely the error of earlier revolutionaries to believe that society could be transformed all at once and by the power of will, instead of through the historical evolution out of which revolution had to arise. Marx's feeling of separation from those he accused of revolutionary *Schwärmerei* was heightened by his experience in 1848—an experience of revolutionary failure. Looking back in 1863 Marx recalled his own enthusiasm of 1848 as a childish delusion; events had taught him how swiftly revolutions could go astray and how easily they could be exploited by scoundrels. Billington seems unaware that committed revolutionaries also were troubled by the negative possibilities of revolutions. Yet the Bolsheviks too remembered that revolution had betrayed its votaries in the past, and feared that their revolution would have its Thermidor.

For these reasons it is hard to accept Billington's equation of the revolutionary faith with the impulse to radical simplification. Powerful yearnings for simplification were abroad in the late 18th century, fueled by the baroque complexity of the Old Regime, with its spider-web network of privilege so tightly spun that government could not work itself free enough to survive. Faced with the crisis of monarchy and society, many non-revolutionaries felt the pull of simplification. Perhaps revolutionaries felt it still more strongly, and it may be that an impulse to have done with all the intricate and immovable circumstances that stand in the way of satisfying solutions to social and political problems has inspired many a commitment to revolution. But that impulse need not sweep all else aside. The *Communist Manifesto* voiced its simplifying slogans, but it also contained separate and contrasting programs of political action for the Communists of each European country, based on the different situations they faced. Here as elsewhere in revolutionary history the desire for simplification has not precluded a recognition of complexity.

Can we arrive at a less accusatory and confining description of what lies at the center of the revolutionary faith? What distinguishes revolutionaries from the rest of us is a displaced sense of where the boundaries lie between the merely visionary or thinkable and the really possible and achievable in social life. Revolutions push the limits of human potentiality out beyond the confines of the established and the everyday. To believe in this displacement of boundaries can be irrational; it may even be a form of madness. But it is also an appeal to the power of imagination, one to which many of the chief figures in modern art and literature have responded. Above all we must remember that it has also been the reflection of a real experience, the experience of revolutionary and critical moments that push men beyond and above—as well as below—the expectations bred in day-to-day life. It is the presence of actual and potential revolutionary situations in modern history that has liberated the social imagination and created the revolutionary tradition, not the other way around. The fires of revolution may burn in men's minds after the original conflagrations that set them off in the world have gone out. But we must not allow that circumstance to obscure the sources of revolutionary vision that arise from the real world of action rather than out of disordered imaginations. Are we not all flammable?

Jerrold Seigel

Jerrold Seigel is the author of *Marx's Fate* (Princeton University Press). He is working on a study of French bohemianism.

Lost in Translation

A Part of Speech
by Joseph Brodsky

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $12.95)

The translation of Russian poetry has become the great border war of American letters. The friendship of Edmund Wilson and Vladimir Nabokov foundered on the rendering of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and it was Nabokov who suggested that the suitable revenge for Robert Lowell's "imitations" of Russian poetry would be to translate him into Russian by turning his phrase, "leathery love," into something like "the large football of passion." English translations of a brilliant and tragic generation of Russian poets—Nikolai Gumilev, shot down by a firing squad while he clutched a volume of Homer to his breast; Osip Mandelstam, starved to death in the labor camps; Marina Tsvetaeva, who hanged herself after 20 years of exile; Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova who survived to write the indelible poems of those years—have arrived in America, attended by an enormous amount of skirmishing at the barricades of the literary quarterlies.

Joseph Brodsky, spiritual heir to the tradition of Mandelstam and Akhmatova, has also inherited their difficult passage. He came to the attention of Americans in 1964 when, at the age of 24, he was arrested by the Soviet government for "parasitism." Eight years later he was expelled from the Soviet Union and settled in the United States. A volume of his early work was published in 1973. *A Part of Speech* collects translations of some of his earlier work together with a large selection of poems written since his exile. The work was done by a group of translators under Brodsky's supervision and that, presumably, of his editors at Farrar, Straus & Giroux. It is a book to have looked forward to, not only because Americans have grown accustomed through writers like Nabokov and Czelaw Milosz to the haunting literature of exile being made in our midst, but also because Brodsky has lived in both faces of the mirror world of the cold war; and the rest of us, affected daily by its subliminal pressure, want his testimony. There are a handful of poems here to justify that hope, but for the most part reading *A Part of Speech* is like wandering through the ruins of a noble building.

Just how bad the trouble is may be judged from these lines in "Lullaby of Cape Cod": "Therefore, sleep well. Sweet dreams. Knit up that sleeve./ Sleep as those only do who have gone pee-pee." Such fatal miscalculations of

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tone, candidates for any future *Stuffed Owl*, the famous anthology of great moments in the history of awful verse, are fairly common. For example:

> My blood is very cold—
> its cold is more withering
> than iced-to-the-bottom streams.
> People are not my thing.

And when the words are wrenched from the order of natural speech to meet the requirements of a poetic form, things get even worse:

> A thing can be battered, burned,
> gutted and broken up.
> Thrown out. And yet the thing
> never will yell, "Oh, fuck!"

The specific difficulties of getting Russian poetry into English are notorious. Russian is an inflected, characteristically polysyllabic language, much more flexible in its word order than English. Moreover, English poetry is a much older art. Metrical poems in English have been written for over 400 years, in Russian for something like 200. That is, in terms of exhausting the resources of meter and rhyme, Russian verse could be said to be as fresh as English poetry was at the end of the age of Pope. In America, a metrical poem is likely to conjure up the idea of the sort of poet who wears ties and lunches at the faculty club. In Russia it suggests the moral force of an art practiced against the greatest personal odds, as a discipline, solitary and intense. As a result, the kind of poem that Brodsky writes, difficult to render anyway, has to be rendered with attention to the preservation of its form when that form, translated into English, is in danger of being transposed at the same time into another key altogether.

This helps to account for the difficulty of the task, but not for the results, which sometimes read like first high school exercises in the composition of metrical poetry, or worse, like sophisticated parodies of those attempts, like Peter Quince himself:

> The strength, the gallantry
> are stolen away from my muscles
> cowardly.

or:

> and a mulatto girl melts lovingly like
> chocolate
> while in masculine embrace she purrs
> insensate. . . .

or:

> linked to weak gums, to heartburn
> brought about
> by a diet unfamiliar and alien. . . .

or:

> any erosion begins with willing,
> the minimum of which is the heart, the
> basis
> of stasis. Or so I was told in that oasis
> of school. Remove, dear chums, your
> faces!

There are other lines which look like nothing so much as those typos from the *Des Moines Register* that the *New Yorker* likes to use as filler: "Thrushes chirp within the hairdo of the cypress."

The translators have clearly struggled with tone. Should Brodsky sound like Lowell? like Auden? Byron? Pope? A preferred solution, because Brodsky is an ironist, is that tediously bouncy rhythm produced by clever young men of indeterminate age down from the university and set to make a splash:

> When you recall me in that land,
> although this phrase isn't oracular—
> a fact unthinkable for an
> eye armed with tears as its binocular. . . .

Another is to make him sound like an 18th-century hack rewriting Shakespeare:

> to keep the mind from getting scorched
> by horrid, all-consuming malice;
> and if we both were saved from such
> a fate and didn't drink this chalice. . . .

And some of the writing is unclassifiable:

> Something lipsticked stuffs
> the ear with lacerating lengthy words,
> like running fingers through a hairdo
> stiff
> with lice. . . .

Then there are the clichés of iambic rhythm, like the excessive use of the possessive case: "retreating north before winter's assault," "closed to the clash of day's discord," "July's conclusion merges with the rains," "rubbed by the light on space's surface." It is like reading a book that keeps sneezing. And the absurd poetic diction: "the vast wet of ocean," "a strengthless breeze." There is padding for the sake of rhyme: "The bright corona, / the crimson petals abuzz, acrawl with wings / of dragonflies, of wasps and bees with stings," and "I said that the leaf may destroy the bud; / what's fertile falls in fallow soil—a dud"; and the padding to which translators are tempted because there are so often fewer words in a line of Russian verse than in an English equivalent. This leads fairly often to massive redundancy:

> Eyes can be bruised and hurt
> by people as well as things
>
> In general, of all our organs the eye
> alone retains its elasticity.

Poetry, Ford Madox Ford told Ezra Pound in 1912, must be at least as well written as prose. There is, in fact, a kind of contempt for poetry in letting language like this stand. What editor would have let that last sentence go, with its "alone" contradicting its "in general" and rendering the whole thing ludicrous, if he were working on a prose manuscript? Who, indeed, would print stuff like this?

> Age is growth of a new but a very fine
> hearing that only to silence hearkens
>
> Still, change for the best, since fright,
> horror, shudders
> are alien to objects. So little puddles
> won't be found under objects like under
> others
> even when your small object is to expire
>
> and trees stand queuing up for the
> narrow
> sturgeon-like waves; that's the only type
> of fish the Thames ever is fit to offer. . . .

Brodsky, of course, cannot be held responsible for this carnage. Readers who want to get a sense of his strength should turn immediately to the powerful title poem, "A Part of Speech," which is translated by Brodsky himself and is wholly free from the grotesquerie that characterizes the book as a whole. There is other work that is equally fine. Richard Wilbur's "The Funeral of Bobo" is a brilliant poem in any language. George L. Kline's "Nunc Dimittis" is beautiful and very plain. Derek Walcott's version of the first of two "Letters from the Ming Dynasty" is flawless work, and so is the rich sequence of poems, "In England," translated by Alan Meyers. His version of "To Evgeny" is also very good. David McDuff's "Strophes" is uneven, but some sections of it are among the strongest work in the book.

Readers will also want to look at "A Cape Cod Lullaby." It is full of tasteless and hackneyed writing, but in passages seems as if it must be a poem of extraordinary interest. In an atmosphere of insomnia and stifling heat, the poet regards his situation:

> Having sampled two
> oceans as well as continents, I feel I know
> what the globe itself must feel: there's
> nowhere to go.

Coming:

Paul Fussell on

Graham Greene.

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Elsewhere is nothing more than a far-flung strew
of stars, burning away.

This is the clear, disenchanted vision which, in "To Evgeny," sees the pyramids of Mexico and takes their measure:

Bas-reliefs with sundry scenes, complete with writhing bits
of serpent bodies and the mysterious alphabet
of a tongue which never needed a word for "or."
What would they say if they could speak once more?

Nothing at all. At best, talk of triumph snatched
over some adjoining tribe of men, smashed
skulls. Or how pouring blood into bowls
sacrificed to the Sun God strengthened the latter's bowels;
how sacrifice of eight young and strong men before dark
guarantees a sunrise more surely than the lark.

The combination of sanity and cheerful disgust could be Pushkin's. He is paraphrased later in the poem: "everywhere dumbness and cruelty come up and say, "Hello,/here we are!" So the vision is partly moral and social, but it has been passed through romanticism; partly it derives from a sharp sense of the way the past unravels and is lost:

Old Nastasya is dead, I take it, and Pesterev, too, for sure
and if not, he's sitting drunk in the cellar or
is making something out of the headboard of our bed:
a wicket gate, say, or some kind of shed.

Nothing is Brodsky's theme, the struggle of consciousness against the horror and boredom of things. At his best, he sounds something like Robert Lowell when Lowell is sounding like Byron—jaded, nervous, quick-eyed, alert to any smallest hint that the world is something more than numbingly predictable, brutal, and inert by turns. It is all the more ironic, then, that the nothingness this book most often calls up is the kind figured by Pope at the end of *The Dunciad* when the sheer accumulation of inept and unintelligent writing puts out all the lights: "Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,/And universal Darkness buries All." I think our hope must be that Joseph Brodsky, like Nabokov and Samuel Beckett, becomes his own translator.

Robert Hass

Robert Hass's most recent book of poems, *Praise* (Ecco Press), received the William Carlos Williams Award.

The Politics of Friendship

Beyond Adversary Democracy
by Jane J. Mansbridge

(Basic Books; $20)

Although America boasts the world's oldest living constitution, its representative system is not the generic form of democracy. In its founding form in the West, democracy was more often direct than representative. Which is to say, it prized community more than equality, participation more than representation, citizenship more than equal power, and face-to-face deliberation more than parliamentary rule-making. Thus 19th-century sociologists liked to point to the village and even tribal origins of democratic communalism, while recent advocates of participation like the late Hannah Arendt have reinstituted the celebration of the ancient Greek polis initiated by such classical republican theorists as Machiavelli and Rousseau.

Nonetheless, there can be little question that under conditions of large-scale, pluralistic, industrial society, the paradigmatic form of democracy has become liberal and representative. The assumption has been that in mass societies composed of competing parties, factions, and interest groups, democratic politics will have as its chief aims the representation and adjudication of private interests and the protection of private rights. Popular institutions are intended to afford accountability rather than participation and popular sovereignty rather than popular self-government. In this modern setting, the generic communitarian model has been relegated to the status of (at best)a nostalgic utopia or (at worst) a "totalitarian temptation" calculated to undermine all that the democrat cares for.

Yet those dissatisfied with liberal democracy have returned again and again to the ideas of a face-to-face community of neighbors and a politics of friendship as remedies to our democratic ills. In the 1960s, young people alienated by the inhuman scale of society and the increasingly unresponsive character of government not only began to experiment with the language of direct democracy but began self-consciously to organize their counter-political and countercultural institutions around participatory and communitarian ideals. In 1962 the Port Huron Statement of the fledgling Students for a Democratic Society condemned American democracy as "apathetic and manipulated" and characterized the condition of Americans as one of "loneliness, estrangement and isolation." It called boldly for a "participatory democracy" in which politics was to have "the function of bringing people out of isolation and into community." Community control, neighborhood autonomy, local participation, organizational self-government, and consensus rule quickly became part of the political rhetoric and social experimentation that dominated the decade. The old theoretical battle between direct and representative democracy was once again explicitly joined in the real world of politics.

The star of participatory democracy burned brightly for a few years and then, along with so many other hopes, flickered out. Community control has now been deemed an expensive failure, the countercultural communes have mostly collapsed, and the prophets of a new world have been swallowed up and digested by the old.

There have been books about the desperate democratic hopes of that brief era—Raymond Mungo's *Total Loss Farm* and Michael Zuckerman's *Peaceable Kingdoms* were among the most candid and poignant—but there has been no attempt to assimilate the experience of new left communalism to the larger body of democratic theory. The theorists don't talk about the 1960s and the

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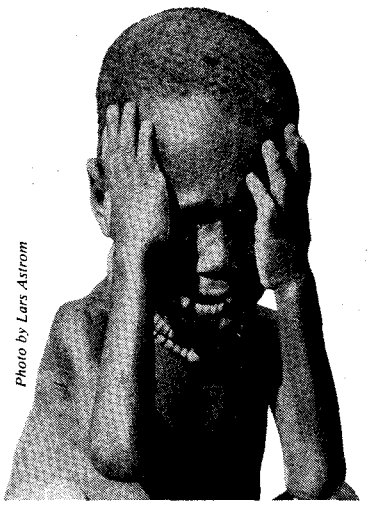
Photo by Lars Astrom

East Africa is crying for help

One of the most serious human tragedies in the world continues to unfold in East Africa, where famine, conflict, and the worst drought in years have brought more than 12 million people close to starvation. More than half of those in danger are children—children who are crying out for their very lives.

As it has in so many past emergencies, UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is responding to this crisis.

In Somalia, where one out of every four persons is a refugee, UNICEF has helped to train over 1,000 refugee health workers and is coordinating a program to provide clean drinking water and sanitation in 25 camps. Emergency food is being rushed to millions of drought victims in Ethiopia; and in Uganda, where countless lives already have been lost, an emergency feeding program is now under way. For Djibouti's suffering children, UNICEF is providing vaccines and other supplies and is undertaking a major water supply program.

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refugees of the 1960s don't talk about theory. Until now.

Jane J. Mansbridge, one foot still planted in her activist new left past, the other dangling in the waters of mainstream academic political philosophy, has brought the two together. *Beyond Adversary Democracy* does not ultimately succeed as a systematic theory of democracy, but it is clearly one of the most arresting accounts of the problems of direct democracy ever written by a sympathetic commentator. Mansbridge comes to participatory (or what she calls "unitary") democracy with a profound attachment to its participatory methods and consensual goals, but also with the conviction that "certain kinds of inequality [will] appear in any society, no matter what its ideology and social system." In this spirit of affectionate skepticism, she sets out to uncover the "internal structure of ideals" of direct democracy, to examine them "under stress" in the real press of community life.

The unitary ideal rests on an

> older understanding of democracy [where] people who disagree do not vote; they reason together until they agree on the best answer. Nor do they elect representatives to reason for them. They come together with their friends to find agreement. This democracy is consensual, based on common interest and equal respect. It is the democracy of face to face relations.

With adversary (representative) and direct (unitary) democracy as ideal types, and degree of participation and of equality as measuring rods, Mansbridge embarks on an inquiry that compels her to become a first-class political anthropologist. Her task is to conduct a careful, informal, in depth, on location, theoretically and historically informed, participatory evaluation of two real unitary democracies: a rural Vermont town (Selby) with 350 citizens which still governs itself directly through an autonomous town meeting, and an urban crisis center (Helpline) with a full-time staff of 41 organized as a radical democratic collective and governed through a "community day" assembly by consensus rule.

Mansbridge's modus operandi, though legitimized by survey instruments and statistical appendices, is that of Laurence Wylie in his Vaucleuse village or Ronald Blythe in Akenfield: to observe with the eyes of the sensitized anthropologist how the women and men of Selby and Helpline conducted their political lives in the early 1970s—and what they thought about their conduct. She puts questions that probe without provoking and stays to listen to responses that are as revealing in their circumspection as they are pointed in their subtlety. She poses all the questions we might wish had been asked of Democritus and Pericles, of Rousseau and Emerson, of every champion of face-to-face democracy, questions not of theory but of practice: Does equal participation mean equal power? Can community self-government overcome social, economic, and racial inequalities? What is the role of social coercion in foisting unity on small collectives? Do the articulate have an advantage in a democracy that depends so completely on the power of words? Is fear a factor in participation? Envy? Must citizens be friends? Is friendship a handicap to the pursuit of interests?

The answers Mansbridge arrives at with the help of her voluble interlocutors are the heart of her book; they enrich and humanize our picture of direct democracy as political practice, but they also confront proponents of the participatory ideal with a Pandora's box of complications which are the more troubling because Mansbridge is herself so obviously among the advocates. A sampling of her findings:

—"In [Selby's] town meeting, as in many face to face democracies, the fear of making a fool of oneself, of losing control, of criticism and of making enemies, all contribute to the tension that arises in the settlement of disputes. The informal arrangements for the suppression of conflict that result tyrannize as well as protect . . . [and] often work ultimately to the disadvantage of the least powerful."

—"Removing the legal barriers to influence, even in the open town meeting democracy, will not by itself produce either the political equality theoretically required by adversary democracy or the widespread participation and equal respect that sustain unitary democracy."

—Decision-making by consensus avoids conflict but it is "time-consuming, repetitious and imprecise . . . [for] lack of clarity bedevils 'less structured' alternatives to traditional forms of decision-making." Moreover, "in a consensual system, the minority is, in a sense, eliminated. After it agrees to go along, it leaves no trace. Its objectives go unrecorded."

—Because "verbal skills" and "skills in persuasion" dominate the proceedings

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of face to face democracies, the undereducated and inarticulate may find themselves overwhelmed by a "tyranny of eloquence" in their assemblies. "A face to face assembly lets those who have no trouble speaking in public defend their interests; it does not give the average citizen comparable protection." —Informal decision structures typical of small communities may give unfair advantage to those with longevity or those with physical or geographic proximity to the center of power. In Selby, participation in town meetings rarely reached 30 percent of the eligible population; indeed, the town hall could seat only one half of the citizens of the town.

In sum, Mansbridge concludes, there are powerful limits to the politics of friendship, and for all of its virtues "participation in face to face democracies is not automatically therapeutic; it can make participants feel humiliated, frightened and even more powerless than before." The "bitter" but unavoidable conclusion for Mansbridge is that the modern nation state—America today—must remain "primarily adversary."

This conclusion, realistic as it may seem, points to certain weaknesses in *Beyond Adversary Democracy*. For it is a conclusion that results less from the sociological reservations of Mansbridge the astute political anthropologist than from the typological confusions of Mansbridge the rather less astute political theorist. The trouble starts with her fundamental distinction between "adversary" and "unitary" democracy. The conventional distinction is between representative and participatory or between liberal and communitarian democracy. By emphasizing the unitary aspect of direct democracy, she subordinates communal autonomy and participatory self-government to social and political homogeneity. Which is to say, she makes the mistaken assumption that direct democracy must start with a homogeneous community which is intrinsically unitary and conflict-free. With consensus as a prior condition, the art of politics becomes little more than the solidification and articulation of agreement. But consensual communities free of significant conflict are in fact not political at all, and fall beyond the pale of democracy altogether. In this sense, there can be some doubt whether Mansbridge's Helpline—a workplace community with a defining sense of common purpose that preempts serious conflict from the outset—can be regarded as a political example.

The crucial question for any genuinely political community is not whether there is conflict (if it is political there must be), but how conflict is treated. From this perspective, the difference between direct and representative democracy is that the latter deals with conflict by adjudicating competing private interests and protecting private rights, while the former deals with conflict by attempting to transform competing private interests into common public purposes and to reformulate issues of private rights as issues of citizenship and civic obligation. Direct democracy does obviously benefit from a degree of prior social consensus, but agreement on common purpose is ultimately its aim rather than its starting point.

Mansbridge's confusion here—her tendency to reduce direct democracy to unitary democracy and then identify its limits as the limits of every conceivable democratic alternative to adversary politics—is what leads her to the bitter but dubious conclusion that direct democracy is inappropriate to the realities of American national life. It also sets Mansbridge against Mansbridge, the proponent of the politics of friendship against the ambivalent realist, the veteran activist of the 1960s against the novice theorist of the 1980s. She is still touched by the spirit of communalism and attracted by face to face politics. And she continues to despise adversary democracy as a "cynical form of society" which, in the very title of her book, she dearly wishes to move "beyond."

Yet because Mansbridge the theorist has reduced direct democracy to unitary consensualism, she sees no alternative to adversary politics in an adversary world. Where there is conflict, her theory compels her to conclude, there can only be adversary procedures. Ideally, she would like America's democracy to offer "both a unitary and an adversary face," but as Selby and Helpline make abundently clear, the two approaches tend in their psychology and their politics to exclude one another—each corrupting the attitudes (competitive versus cooperative, mutualistic versus privatistic) on which the other depends.

Mansbridge traverses the territory of direct democracy with courage and intelligence, but by staking it out in terms of a muddled theory she leaves us with an untoward and disturbing irony: a book called *Beyond Adversary Democracy* whose chief conclusion is that we can't get beyond adversary democracy, least of all with the sort of unitary alternative on which, at the outset, she seems to want us to to pin our hopes.

But unitary democracy is only one form of direct democracy: there are ways to enhance civic participation in American life which are not wedded to tiny, face to face, consensual communities. Federalism, community board decentralization, civic education, national service, referenda and initiatives, and electronic (TV) participation in debates, surveys, polls, and even elections suggest some of the possibilities. Hence, to warn of the perils of consensus and the limits of friendship, vital task that it is, is not to concede victory in the battle of direct and representative democracy to the adversary cynics. Quite the contrary, it is to equip the participatory democrat and reformer with the kind of self-knowledge and prudence essential to getting beyond adversary democracy. The reader who can be inspired by Mansbridge's activist commitments and made cautious by her anthropological prudence without being demoralized by the pessimism of her uncertain theorizing should be able to continue on the journey she starts, without her, perhaps, but very much thanks to her all the same.

Benjamin R. Barber

Benjamin R. Barber is author of the forthcoming *Strong Democracy* (University of California Press) and a novel, *Marriage Voices* (Summit Books).

Coming:

A Portrait of

Two Russian Czars.

Corrections:

Due to a misplaced line of type, the last quotation in the "Reminders" box on page 10 of the November 29 issue was incorrectly identified. The correct source, as Mark Ragan had originally noted, was from the *Congressional Record* of 1968.

In the chart showing the population of Jerusalem in Marie Syrkin's "Jerusalem Belongs to Israel" (*TNR*, December 13), the total population for 1922 should have been 62,578.

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Jerusalem Diarist

Begin and Eggs

I wish I could report that Menachem Begin's government has fallen. Unfortunately, it still stands, though just barely. It's not that I haven't tried. I thought I really had him after I and other journalists were invited to breakfast at Blair House when Begin was in Washington last month. We first were served bagels, lox, and cream cheese, then scrambled eggs and—no, not bacon, but steak. Bad enough. Mixing dairy and meat is not kosher. But nobody objected, not even the scripture-toting prime minister himself. Israeli governments have fallen for lesser desecrations. In fact Begin came to power when the religious parties deserted Itzhak Rabin's Labor-dominated coalition because he had permitted an airport ceremony for arriving American jets to go on past Friday sundown, the start of the Sabbath. Conscious of the special sensibilities of the godly ones now allied with Begin, I reported this culinary profanity to an Israeli journalist. It caused only a small stir in Israel: a few rabbis grumbled, but their political parties wouldn't bite. If they brought this government down and elections were held, most of them would be relegated to a life of full-time prayer, plus whatever they could bring in—eyes heavenward, hands under the table—on the side.

The government doesn't govern. Begin himself is minister of defense. He has coveted this portfolio because his arch-rival, David Ben Gurion, who disdained him, who in fact wouldn't sit at the same table with him, held the defense post while he was premier. Begin has it now because his coalition can't agree on who else should. He doesn't work at it, and the results are awful. If he were to work at it, the results would be worse. There's little long-range military planning, and just about none that's coordinated with domestic priorities. There are also virtually no civilian constraints on how the army enforces security in the territories. As the *Jerusalem Post* put it, "hardliners in uniform . . . are managing to unravel the delicate web of cooperation that has been woven over the year." Begin can still corral a plurality of three or four votes, but he no longer can muster an actual majority. But his cynicism is contagious. Two of Begin's noisiest critics, Moshe Dayan and Ezer Weizman, skipped the last of two recent no-confidence votes in parliament. The rate of inflation is about 150 percent, there may be more emigration than immigration, and lying has become the currency of official discourse. Begin has 14 percent approval in the polls. Yet he clings to the shabby remnants of authority, blackmailed by his equally weak coalition partners, hectoring his critics, raising his voice about King David, lowering it about the Holocaust, pointing his accusing index finger everywhere. There are no longer opponents, but traitors. Begin is never at a loss for words. Ask him what time it is and he'll tell you how to make a clock—incorrectly. At the aforementioned breakfast, Begin lectured Joe Kraft, James Reston, Marvin Kalb, Meg Greenfield, and your personal correspondent on the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems. He is an embarrassment to me. No matter. But he is a danger to Israel.

Ever since David Hume, it has been a commonplace that there is no intrinsic connection between religious belief and ethical practice. In Israel these days, the discordance between the two couldn't be sharper. There is no force in Israeli life more corrupt or more corrupting than the rabbinical establishment. A few years back, the Labor minister of housing killed himself because of rumors that he'd deflected government funds to his party. Socialism still insists on the notion of disgrace. But the theocrats know no shame. Formally charged with deflecting government funds to himself, the current minister of religion, with the assistance of his own devout colleagues and Begin's rather less devout minions, pretends that he is still worthy of his function. That's no surprise: he is less venal than the indulgence peddlers and simonists who protect him. But these dogmatists who steal from the public till are moderate fanatics when compared to those Israeli orthodox Jews who—believe it or not—do not recognize the legitimacy of Israel and look to Arafat to liberate the holy city. The Neturei Karta, Jerusalem's self-appointed "guardians," are now engaged in a violent campaign against autopsies. And last week, after a bus with an ad sporting a woman in a bikini drove past their quarter, they protested by breaking municipal water pipes and hurling garbage into the streets. In the past, the authorities would quickly repair the damage and clean up. But Teddy Kollek, tied with Ed Koch as my favorite no-bullshit mayor, had had enough. If these people choose to live in a ghetto, he decided, let them.

You would think that all this disarray in Zion might be solace to the hapless Arabs. It's not that way at all. Never, not even on the morrow of their most humiliating defeats, have they seemed more dejected. A bit of this can be imputed to Begin who, having recognized at Camp David the legitimate rights of these Palestinians, now apparently regrets any hope he'd offered that these rights might take concrete form. Fortunately, a more conciliatory government, less cruel and more tactful, will soon succeed in Jerusalem. But the Arabs aren't ready to take advantage of the opportunities therein created. Dr. Waldheim and M. Giscard d'Estaing still insist that the West Bank be delivered to the PLO, which wants everything but to which Israel will deliver nothing, and which continues to terrorize those local Arabs who might just want to see what they realistically can wrestle from Israel. To these old stand-by PLO well-wishers, now add Senator Charles Percy, certifiable simpleton, who wants to help Arafat to "realize his compelling wish to be a chief of state before he dies . . . no matter how small it is. . . ." Very touching. I also have a compelling wish: to be the conductor of a major symphony orchestra, no matter how small it is. But my aspiration will move the trustees of the New York Philharmonic as much as Arafat's will move Ronald Reagan and Shimon Peres. These men want to deal with King Hussein. But at the Amman all-Arab summit (minus four countries and the PLO) late last month, Jordan repudiated Security Council Resolution 242, which has been the only basis for negotiations reciprocally accepted by the actual combatants. That's the price the king paid for having Iraq—widely dubbed "moderate" since its war against Iran—in attendance at his fest. Quite a price, and Hussein is a fool to pay it. Advertisements in the Hebrew press now promote a luxury tour called "Egypt for the Orthodox." And at the Damascus Gate, there's a communal taxi, or *sherut*, many of them in fact, which for about $20 will take you from Jerusalem to Cairo. This is Sadat's achievement, and Begin's too. When Begin's successor takes office, will there be another Arab leader willing to pursue peace with him?

M.P.

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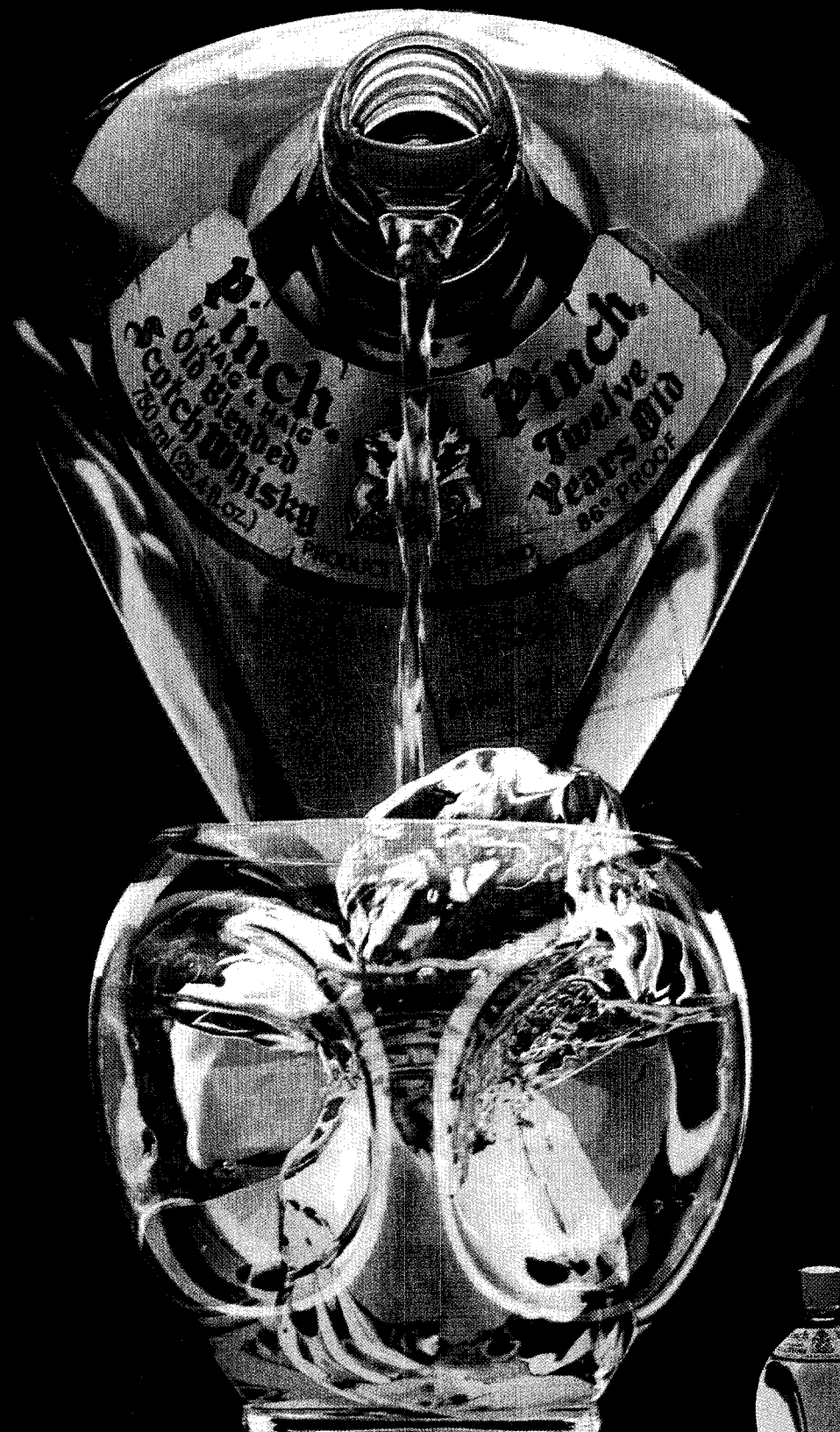

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